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Forest Hills. L. I.

THE ADMIRAL OF THE DRY

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JOHN DEARING
THE ADMIRAL OF THE DRY

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1773

THE ADMIRAL OF THE DRY

A COMEDY IN THREE ACT

BY

JOHN DEARING

INTER-CITY PRESS

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THE ADMIRAL OF THE DRY

A Play in Three Acts

By JOHN DEARING

PERSONS IN THE PLAY:

JOHN VOLSTEAD.....A Bootlegger
JACK.....His Son
DOUGAL.....Henchman to John Volstead
JONATHAN.....Henchman to John Volstead
ADMIRAL MATILDA CABOT.....of the U. S. Dry Navy
BOSUN JANE of the U. S. Dry Navy
GUNNER JEMIMA of the U. S. Dry Navy
PRINCESS OF WALES.
PUTAN TAKE.....Hindu Servant of Princess

Action takes place in Tarpon Island, a British possession three miles off the Florida Coast in the year 2020 A. D.

Scene—A cocoanut-grove in the garden of John Volstead's villa near the seashore.

THE FIRST ACT

THE ADMIRAL OF THE DRY

ACT I

(*Scene, Tarpon Island, the most westernly of the Bahama group. A cocoanut grove in the garden of JOHN VOLSTEAD'S villa, near the seashore. Lianas, orchids and tropical vegetation bathed in bright sunshine. Prow of a boat on one side and propeller of an aeroplane on the other showing from wings. J. V. asleep in a hammock from which the receiver of a wireless telephone dangles. Two of J. V.'s henchmen, one a Scot and the other a Kentuckian are busy broaching cocoanuts and filling them from bottles of whiskey that they take out of a case marked "Johnny Walker." Time of the afternoon siesta in the tropics. Year 2020 A. D.*)

The two men continue their task of uncorking bottles and filling the cocoanuts, for a minute or two, without talking. They grunt a little as they pitch the filled nuts into a box. JOHN VOLSTEAD wakes with a yawn and walks towards them swishing a cane. He is a well preserved man of about sixty in a palm-beach suit and panama hat. A heavy army revolver hangs from his belt.)

JOHN VOLSTEAD. Dougal, where's my son Jack?

DOUGAL. He left us about half an hour ago, Mr. Volstead.

JOHN VOLSTEAD. Still reading his poetry books, instead of attending to business. Hells Bells! We live in a sentimental age, now the World is ruled by women. Who's going to brand those cases of cocoanuts and stencil the correct addresses on them. [*Takes out a note book and reads.*] Isaac Izenstein, Hotel of the Pleasant Passover, Puritan Avenue, Forest Hills. Let's see—how many does Izzy want this week. Ten-eighteen-twelve-thirty-four! With the rest that will mean one hundred cases. Izzy's one of my best customers, and I don't wish to disappoint him. If my distinguished ancestor, the founder of all bootlegging business, could see what a lazy good-for-nothing fellow Jack is he'd turn in his grave!

JONATHAN. Say, Boss, do leave the young fellow alone. He's all right. I'll stencil the cases and they sure will catch tonight's flyer.

J.-V. Hells Bells! You tarnation idiot. Don't you know Forest

Hills is in the heart of New York City. Let me remind you this is the year two thousand and twenty.

JONATHAN. What about it, Mr. Volstead?

[J.-V. *shows considerable anger.*

DOUGAL. He's thinking that it will be preferable to write the address in Hebrew. Dinna ye ken that the New York Post Office doesna deliver parcels addressed in English, or at any rate the consignment will be delayed till the address is deciphered by an interpreter. All addresses for New York, Boston and Philadelphia should be written in the language of the Prophet Moses. Man, Jonathan, if you had been as long at this job as me y'ed ken Mr. Volstead was entirely right.

[*Enter JACK.*

J.-V. Where have you been? You lazy good-for-nothing son of a sea pistol!

JACK. I was admiring the azure-tinted sea as the Caribbean waves rolled over from Florida to this Island, the rainbow colored fishes in the lagoon, the heavenly white of the seagulls' wings. Oh father, with what glorious full-throated song the mocking bird greets his mate. I was wondering

J.-V. You always are

JACK. I was wondering, father, why the male bird of a species is always larger and stronger and has much more gorgeous plumage than the female. In the human race it is otherwise. The cock, for example. How the brilliant plumaged chanticleer lords it over the hens It is not so today in the human race.

J.-V. [*Gruffly.*] The women have put it over 'us.

JACK. Oh, father, why was I born a man? I should have loved to have been a woman. Think of the opportunities open to them.

J.-V. Well, bootlegging is not a bad profession. You are lucky to be born to inherit such an old established business as ours is.

JACK. Indeed I am, father.

J.-V. And you have had a good education. Did I not send you to Harvard? Cut out all that poetical nonsense. Did I send you to college to learn all that rubbish? Do you know what I sent you to Harvard for?

JACK. I don't know, father, unless it was to learn Hebrew so that I could address packing cases of alcoholic stimulants to the Semitic districts of the United States.

J.-V. Alcoholic stimulants be damned! Hootch! Hootch! Hootch! Take up your stencil and get to work!

JACK. [*Sitting down and addressing a packing case.*] Alas! Father, I should have been an Elizabethan . . .

J.-V. Hells bells! Whatever for do you want to live in New Jersey?

JACK. I have lived six hundred years too late. Some say we of the twenty-first century live in a poetical age, but I doubt it. We all write poetry, but it is bad poetry. We all drink whiskey, but it is bad whiskey. How can nightingales live on peanuts. How can inspiration come through absorbing . . . hootch?

DOUGAL. What about Rabbie Burns?

JACK. A thousand pardons, my good Dougal . . . he was a great poet.

DOUGAL. I mind those prophetic words of the bard: "Freedom and whiskey gang thegither."

J.-V. Can your poetry and get on with your work. Confound you for a brace of windbags.

JACK. [*As he stencils the case.*] Father, don't you think you are a little severe. I didn't choose to be a bootlegger.

J.-V. There, there, my son, perhaps I *was* hard on you, but I naturally expect such great things of a Volstead. Think of the distinguished name you bear. Let me remind you that you are the great-great-great-great-grandson of the man who gave his name to the 18th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. Volstead, the Patron Saint of our profession.

JACK. Professor Cohen of Harvard says that we are descended from another branch of the family. He has looked up the records at Ellis Island.

J.-V. [*Indignantly.*] What does he know about our family affairs?

JACK. Well, he's a Professor of Genealogy. He ought to know.

J.-V. This is the flask the great Volstead used to drink from. I inherited it from my father. Some day it will be yours.

JACK. These are old traditions lost in the mists of antiquity like Mayflower furniture—but it's grand to think one has great ancestors. We live on their deeds. Did our illustrious ancestor carry his flask on the hip?

J.-V. How should I know; perhaps they didn't have hip-pockets in those days.

JACK. Speaking of our ancestors, I mean the real ones. Wasn't it Oley Volstead, my grandfather, who purchased Tarpon Island?

J.-V. It was.

JACK. That is why you and I are British subjects.

J.-V. Sure When my father, your grandfather, bought the island on which we are standing now, he found it necessary for business reasons, to renounce his American nationality and become a Britisher. It went very much against the grain with him.

JACK. Then why did he do it?

J.-V. Well, he was a wine-merchant

JACK. You mean a bootlegging one?

J.-V. That's nothing to be ashamed of!

JACK. [*Quickly.*] Of course not.

J.-V. You and I, Jack, are straight Americans, although we are British subjects. [*Walks up to a small Union Jack hanging from the unstepped mast of the boat and fingers it.*] Yes, my son, this island is British today, but slowly little by little, a few inches every day, it is approaching the Florida Coast.

JACK. I have heard that before. In Oley Volstead's time how far was Tarpon Island from the United States?

J.-V. In those days it was five miles across the straits at high tide—a full two miles outside the Three Mile Limit fixed by international law as the limit of territorial waters.

JACK. How far is Tarpon Island distant now from the United States?

J.-V. The last survey by Hutchins and Mutchins of Miami showed that at high tide it was three miles fifty yards away. In other words, Tarpon Island today is only fifty yards outside the Three Mile Limit.

JACK. Well, we are not far off from Prohibition. Only fifty yards!

J.-V. The old harbor wall at Palm Beach has changed both the configuration of the mainland and of Tarpon Island. The coast of Florida is continually changing owing to drifting sand banks. Here where I stand is solid coral rock [*whispering confidentially*]; beneath our feet are ancient hootch cellars hollowed out by Oley Volstead, but over there not a hundred yards from us—d'y see that banana grove—[*pointing*] I used to swim in ten feet of water when I was a youngster.

JACK. Only the sea is immutable! *It* never changes!

J.-V. Cut it out! Can it!

JACK. Oh father, you do hurt my feelings!

J.-V. What has a bootlegger to do with such thoughts? You should think of improving our business. One of these days I shall send you to call on the vice-presidents of the New York Banks.

JACK. Do you wish to borrow money?

J.-V. No, lad, to sell them good, honest-to-God Scotch whiskey.

JACK. Father, I should be too shy to approach all these grand ladies. [*A pause.*] Tell me, father, what will happen when this island is situated within the Three Mile Limit?

J.-V. What will happen? Why we shall be dry!

DOUGAL. Dry!

JONATHAN. Dry!

J.-V. Sure! High and dry on the beach!

DOUGAL. Will the fact that a British Island has drifted within the Three Mile Limit not lead to international complications between England and the United States? Ye ken what they think o' steamships bringing supplies of liquor into New York harbor. It seems to me it would give rise to a mair serious viewpoint if an Island instead of a steamship were to contravene the law.

J.-V. The contingency has already been provided for.

DOUGAL. Is that so?

J.-V. The Haines-Punchford treaty provides that in event of Tarpon Island changing its geographical position so that it is inside the American Three Mile Limit, Great Britain will exchange it for Penguin Island in Alaska.

DOUGAL. And, Mr. Volstead, will you no receive compensation from the British Government for the loss to your business through Tarpon Island becoming dry?

J.-V. I shall not require it of them.

DOUGAL. What for no?

J.-V. I have a policy with Lloyds to cover the risk of Tarpon Island entering the Three Mile Limit of American Territorial waters. I shall receive one million dollars indemnity.

DOUGAL. Isn't that fine?

J.-V. But do not let us think of that my friends. The old established firm of Volstead owes a duty to its American customers and in the meantime we must supply their demands promptly and regularly. To work, my lads! Not for nothing the Seven Seas know me as the "Hootch King" [*reflectively*]. It would break my heart to have to leave Tarpon Island. I have never known another home!

DOUGAL. That's the speerit. Heave ho! [*Lifts a case of cocoanuts.*]

JONATHAN. Shall we use the airship or the boat to run the cargo over to the mainland tonight? The sea is rough!

J.-V. The boat, Jonathan my lad. You can brave the waves!

[The two men push off in the boat. The telephone bell of the wireless sounds and J.-V. snatches up the receiver.]

J.-V. Who's there?

VOICE. [As through a megaphone or some form of amplifier.] Walker's Distillery, Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. Assistant Manager speaking!

J.-V. How are you Johnny?

VOICE. Still going strong.

J.-V. Put me on to the American Export Department. Book me for a thousand cases c. i. f. by undersea freighter of your "squirrel brand."

JACK. [Aside.] The sort of whiskey that makes you climb trees!

VOICE. An item of interest.

J.-V. Make it snappy.

VOICE. Admiral Matilda Cabot of the United States Prohibition Navy has torpedoed and sunk our last sending of a thousand cases by the under-sea ship "Rikiavik."

JACK. [Aside.] Matilda, dear Matilda!

J.-V. Double my order and send it by air line route.

VOICE. I'll do that, Mr. Volstead. [Rings off.]

JACK. We live in a wonderful age. What heights of perfection wireless has reached. You can ring up anybody, anywhere, at any time. Our thoughts themselves are scarcely our own.

J.-V. It's piracy on the High Seas. My clients will be disappointed. With the Dry Navy cruising in these waters I can get no insurance company to take the risk. The hootch is not covered by insurance. With whiskey at \$10 a case wholesale Admiral Matilda Cabot has cost me ten thousand dollars. I'll get even with her. I swear it. Zounds, if I lay hands on her I'll break every bone in her body.

JACK. But think, father, Admiral Matilda Cabot is a full Admiral of the Prohibition Navy of the United States. Surely you won't harm her. It would take some courage to do so, I should say!

J.-V. She is the curse of all honest seafaring bootleggers between Cape Race and Key West.

JACK. Is it not Matilda's, I mean Admiral Matilda Cabot's duty to put down smuggling?

J.-V. That's a nasty word. You accuse your father of being a smuggler.

JACK. Smugglers, father, are picturesque and romantic characters. They used to sail in luggers and live in caves.

J.-V. Romance be blowed. But if you want romance I tell you it's right here in Tarpon Island! As for caves, the coral rock of the island is honeycombed with hootch cellars. Wasn't it from this island that Blackbeard and his buccaneers preyed upon the Spanish Main. Red gold in galleons, bar silver all bloody after the fight. Men with hooks instead of hands. I've read books about 'em. Smugglers used luggers. I use airships. I guess I'm as romantic as those tarnation smugglers, and an honest bootlegger to boot. If the U. S. customs 'd accept duty I'd be a wine merchant. In fact I am today a bootlegging wine merchant. Hells bells! Why should Admiral Matilda Cabot interfere with my business. Is it just? Is it right? Is it equitable? Hells Bells! Hells Bells! Hells Bells!

JACK. But hark, I hear the sound of the bell. [*Sings it like MACHEATH in the Beggar's Opera.*]

J.-V. Cut it out, Jack.

JACK. All right, dad.

J.-V. I love the excitement of this life. The pleasure of running a thousand cases of Scotch to irrigate that continent over there, right under the nose of the dry navy, is meat and drink to me.

JACK. It certainly is drink!

J.-V. And meat as well, for we make our living by it. I love danger. Do you see that, lad? [*Bares his forearm.*] That's the mark of a bullet. I got it rum-running when I was scarce your age.

JACK. Yes, father, I know you love danger. If there were no risk you'd have retired from business long ago. It's these desperate ventures that attract you. I wish I had your courage. I feel so meek!

J.-V. Any flapper could knock you out in the first round. Why don't you go in for athletics . . . wrestling . . . boxing? [*Puts up his fists.*]

JACK. Only girls do that these days. I wish that I had your courage. How well I remember your quelling a mutiny on the island when twelve of your dago ruffians led by Francesco Murillo demanded fifty cents a bottle instead of thirty-five for landing the goods.

J.-V. Say, didn't I scare 'em. They wished themselves a thousand light years out of my sight. I guess Francesco still bears the marks of my hands on his throat. If it hadn't been for his garlic breath I'd have choked him. [*Lights a cigar.*] I'll treat Admiral Matilda Cabot the same way as I treated Francesco. See if I don't get even with her for sinking the "Rikiavik."

JACK. Father . . . surely . . . [Exit JOHN VOLSTEAD]
. . . [reflectively] . . . why Dad wouldn't dare to harm
Matilda. She'd eat up a dozen men like him. Eat them up! I'll
ask her not to devour dad.

J.-V. [Re-entering excitedly.] Jack, I see Admiral Matilda
Cabot's flagship, the "Sahara," steaming northward. If she only
landed here. I'd get even with the hussy!

[Rushes off the scene and shouts the alarm to DOUGAL and JONA-
THAN. JACK creeps up to the radio receiver. He turns the
dial round several times till he obtains the correct number and
finds himself in communication with the yeowoman of signals
aboard the "Sahara."

JACK. Is that the flagship "Sahara"?

VOICE. I'm the yeowoman of signals aboard her.

JACK. I want to speak to the Admiral.

VOICE. Yes, sir. I'll put you through!

JACK. Matilda, darling! I'm on Tarpon Island!

VOICE. You dear thing! Wait on the beach. I'll swim ashore
as soon as we drop anchor. Ducky . . . duck . . . duck!

JACK. If my father knew that I was in love with Admiral Ma-
tilda Cabot! I'll get some dry towels ready. She hates to get her
feet sandy. "Ducky . . . duck . . . duck" she called me, and she's
going to swim ashore. In the old days Leander the Man swam
to embrace Hero the Woman. Now in the 21st Century it is the
woman who does the swimming. Women! Women! They rule
the world. We men live only by their clemency. I feel quite shy.
[Reappears with a lantern and a bath towel.] Ducky! duck! duck!
[Sits down with his hands on his knees.] I'll wait for her. This light
shall guide my Hero across the Hellespont to her Leander.

[The curtain drops and as it rises JACK is found in the same
position. Moonlight, which brightens slowly as the moon rises
above the palm grove. The voice of a mocking bird is heard.
The silhouettes of battleships pricked with points of light
appear in the straits and on the Florida coast a lighthouse's
beams revolve like the wings of a windmill.

JACK. [Looking seawards.] I see her strong white arm cleaving
the Caribbean sea. How she must love me to brave the fury of
those white-capped waves. The waters, too, abound in man-eating
sharks!

[MATILDA appears. She is a fine buxom woman with a good
figure; she is dressed in a red bathing costume.

MATILDA. Jack!

JACK. Dear Admiral!

MATILDA. Oh you darling boy (*she throws her arms around him*

JACK. [*Facetiously.*] How dry we are! [*tenders her half the bath-towel and dries his palm-beach suit with the other half.*]

MATILDA. Adored one! [*Looks at him languorously.*] Let us sit in the hammock.

JACK. Do you think we ought?

MATILDA. Sure!

[*They sit down in the hammock.*]

JACK. Are your feet very sandy?

MATILDA. Yes, darling.

JACK. [*Wiping them.*] Now we are dry.

MATILDA. Thanks, dear.

JACK. Why I declare your left foot is bleeding. [*Appears horrified at the sight of blood.*]

MATILDA. Probably a shark bit it or I stepped on a clam. It's nothing.

JACK. What courage!

MATILDA. We girls didn't think much of such a small matter at the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

JACK. I declare, your little toe is bitten off!

MATILDA. Nonsense!

JACK. [*Reaching for the wireless.*] Shall I call the fleet surgeon?

MATILDA. No Jack! She must not know I am here! Nobody must know that I am here! That is why I lowered myself down secretly through a torpedo port and swam ashore. If it were common property in the Prohibition Navy that the Admiral had violated the 19th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States by kissing out of doors and out of wedlock it would create a most terrible scandal.

JACK. Would it, dear Admiral?

MATILDA. Yes, Jack, and it would be bad for discipline.

JACK. But your poor toe.

MATILDA. I will grow another. Admiral Nelson lost an eye and an arm and won the Battle of Trafalgar. Surely I can lose one of my toes without hurting my career.

JACK. You may get blood poisoning. Let me call the Fleet Surgeon?

MATILDA. No, Jack. I would not disturb the wine party she is giving in the officers' mess tonight.

JACK. I thought that the "Sahara" was dry—the flagship of the Dry Navy!

MATILDA. So she is, but I suspect she will not be tonight, as the Fleet Surgeon's last requisition of wines for medicinal use was large enough to float a jolly-boat full of husky sailor girls bound for shore to show their beaux a good time. I surmise Fleet Surgeon Antonia Trollope is blind to the world already and if I did call her would probably amputate my leg to save my toe.

[Various amorous demonstrations lasting about twenty seconds.]

JACK. Tell me, dear Admiral, why you did not come ashore in a boat. You had only to give the word and a dozen motor launches would have been dropped from the davits of the "Sahara." Was all this secrecy really necessary?

MATILDA. Well . . .

JACK. *[Shaking a finger at her.]* We men are shrewd observers of the workings of the female mind.

MATILDA. I do not doubt it. Psycho Analysis is the weapon of the weak . . .

JACK. But I love you all the more for what you have done. Confess, my darling, that you swam ashore through these shark-infested waters that I might admire your courage.

MATILDA. Oh, Jack. How you men read our hearts.

JACK. But I am, I hope, a real man and I love you for this proof of love, but promise me you won't swim back.

MATILDA. Jack, if you send me away I swear I will!

JACK. How wonderful. You have such power and yet you seem, well . . . must I say it—well you seem so devoted to me.

MATILDA. Of course I am, my boy . . . and yet, Jacky darling, although I possess all the power that Congress confers upon me as "Admiral of the Dry" I am mortally afraid of breaking the 19th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States relating to osculation off the premises and out of wedlock.

JACK. Matilda, darling . . . what . . . what is osculation?

MATILDA. Oh, you dear, innocent, little creature. *[Kisses him violently.]* This . . . that . . . is osculation!

JACK. My heart is broken as well as the Nineteenth Amendment. Do it again, dear Admiral!

MATILDA. My darling . . . and . . . so . . . you . . . love . . . me *[Looks at him adoringly.]*

JACK. Isn't it nice breaking the laws!

MATILDA. Oh you duck. I could crush you in my arms.

JACK. How strong your arms are, Matilda. Have you kissed another man as you kiss me?

MATILDA. No, darling. You are the first. Seawomen have no time for such frivolities.

JACK. And yet, dear Matilda, I have heard strange stories of seawomen. A husband in every port. We poor, poor men, It is not possible that you could kiss so well if I were the first. Your lips seem to possess this magic touch through long practice. I have heard

MATILDA. [*Curtly.*] You men have nothing to do but sit at home and talk scandal. There . . . there . . . don't cry. Let me tell you how I love you.

JACK. Dear one.

MATILDA. [*Singing.*] Jack's the boy for me.

JACK. How handsome you are . . . tell me, Matilda, when you received my message over the wireless, what were you doing? I long to know.

MATILDA. How well I remember. At the moment I was busy writing my dispatches to the Secretary of the Navy relating to my action of the 21st ultimo in torpedoing the Danish undersea ship "Rikiavik" seven days out of the Port of Glasgow and bound for Bimini in the Bahamas. I had just finished dictating these dispatches when Clarence . . .

JACK. Clarence . . . a man on your vessel! I thought there were only women. Who is he?

MATILDA. Oh, he is only my stenographer.

JACK. I didn't know you had a man stenographer.

MATILDA. We call him an amanuensis on the ship's pay roll.

JACK. What an old-fashioned word.

MATILDA. The Navy has its ancient traditions and we must respect them.

JACK. But I didn't know there was a man on the "Sahara" . . . a man amanuensis . . .

MATILDA. [*Laughing.*] Do you expect him to be a woman? No woman would be stenographer or a-man . . .

JACK. . . u—en—sis

MATILDA. Thanks.

JACK. Of course not, we are in the twenty-first century.

MATILDA. The world, led by the Woman's Clubs of America, has hoisted the banner of female revolt which today has spread all over the globe, even to Turkey, and China, and India.

JACK. True.

MATILDA. Yes, and Africa.

JACK. Really.

MATILDA. Yes, indeed . . . in Mohammedan countries the women are no longer cooped up in harems.

JACK. I suppose not.

MATILDA. No siree! A woman over there keeps her husbands in a harem.

JACK. How cruel of her.

MATILDA. In Salt Lake City the tables have been turned and a she-Mormon sits down to dinner with her Mormon husbands who do the cooking and washing up, and mind the babies. I mean the baby.

JACK. [*Innocently.*] Do the women still give birth to children or do the men give birth to them now?

MATILDA. No, that has not been altered. You talk nonsense . . . but I am digressing. Let me tell you what I was doing when I received your wireless message.

JACK. Yes, darling. How I want to know . . . everything . . . the precise minute . . . what you were doing . . . what you were thinking about.

MATILDA. As I said before, the moment I received your message I was busy dictating my dispatches to the Secretary of the Navy on the subject of my action in sinking by torpedo the Danish undersea boat "Rikiavik" of ten thousand tons, laden with a cargo of mixed drinks exceeding in strength the half of one per cent allowed by the so-called Volstead Act of last century. Suddenly Clarence called my attention to the red light in my cabin above the emergency fire control of our forward battery. "Someone to speak to you, Admiral," said he, looking up at the indicator. "Shall I put you through?" I re-read the sentence in my report ending with "ten thousand cases of Scotch" and slowly took up the receiver. Judge of my delight when I heard your sweet voice over those leagues of sea water. I immediately gave instructions to the Fleet to postpone our manoeuvres and changed the course of my flagship. The other three battleships and five destroyers forming my squadron followed suit. It was a glorious sight to see the manner in which they were manoeuvred as the great ships and destroyers of the Dry Navy answered their helms and buffeted their way through the waves of a stiff nor-easter towards Tarpon Island. Little did I dream, darling, before I received your message, that you were so near. I thought you were still in college at Harvard. That was why the fleet was bound for Bostonian waters . . . but the Dry Fleet can conduct its ma-

noeuvers equally well off the coast of Florida . . . and it will save several ounces of radium to Auntie Sam for fuel.

JACK. In the old days they called her Uncle Sam.

MATILDA. Was that not an insult to the Republic? The women must have been asleep.

JACK. [*Feebly.*] But men were a little more liberal minded, weren't they, in the days of *their* rule. Was not the Statue of Liberty they put up at the entrance to New York harbor a female figure?

MATILDA. Well, it's still standing . . . men only do things by halves. If we women reform we reform properly. Out and out. We're out and outers.

JACK. Isn't the old Statue of Liberty somewhat delapidated? I've never seen it, but my father says so.

MATILDA. Well, its all right . . . but the Navy's going to tow it out to sea and use it as a target for gunnery practice, since the women made a new one, very much larger, higher, indeed, than the old bridge across the Hudson at New York . . . a thousand feet high or more.

JACK. I'd love to see the new Statue of Liberty . . . of course the old one was out of date. It represented old-fashioned ideals . . . but are you sure that it is right to scrap it?

MATILDA. Sure. We're out and outers.

JACK. I should love to see New York. I have friends at Forest Hills. They live in the fortieth floor of an apartment house in Puritan Avenue, next door to the Passover Hotel.

MATILDA. I'll disguise you as a woman and you shall come aboard my flagship. I'll sail for New York.

JACK. I really couldn't think of it. It wouldn't be respectable.

MATILDA. A fig I care about respectability. I only care about breaking the Prohibitory Laws. I have no other moral code. Why should I worry . . . of course they might get me under the Mann Act if I took you aboard—taking a man from one state to another is a serious offence.

JACK. Don't you think that there are too many of these Blue Laws?

MATILDA. No, of course not. Don't you and I live by them?

JACK. What do you mean?

MATILDA. Aren't you a bootlegger?

JACK. Well, I address the cases of nuts for my father. Yes, I suppose I am.

MATILDA. And am I not the Admiral of the Dry?

JACK. [*Looking at her with admiration.*] Yes, dear. Oh, darling, what a strange happening that an Admiral of the Dry Navy should fall in love with a bootlegger.

MATILDA. I have a great admiration for bootleggers. Of course I wage war on them, but they keep me in "rum."

JACK. What? Do you drink "rum"?

MATILDA. I sure do. Try me!

[*JACK leaves the hammock and picks up a cocoanut.*]

JACK. Try this brand. It's "Johnny Walker" as supplied to the Hotel of the Pleasant Passover, Forest Hills.

MATILDA. Must I drink it out of a cocoanut like an anthropoid ape?

JACK. Yes, dear Admiral.

MATILDA. I suppose, Jack, it was your ancestor who taught the human race to drink out of nuts like gorillas in an African jungle.

JACK. My alleged ancestor perhaps . . . how funny you look drinking out of a cocoanut.

[*Claps his hands in delight.*]

MATILDA. Well, isn't it appropriate?

JACK. Why?

MATILDA. We are all descended from monkeys . . . or at least Darwin says so . . . Jack! I'd like to show you my wine-cellar aboard the "Sahara."

JACK. An oasis in the Sahara, I suppose.

MATILDA. After we capture a prize the choicest wines and cordials in the vessel's hold are reserved for my table. Of course I go fifty-fifty with the Sec.

JACK. Do you . . . Who's the Sec?

MATILDA. I mean Mrs. Josephus, the Secretary of the Navy in Washington.

JACK. Oh, I see . . . Aren't you feeling cold after your swim?

MATILDA. I was, but this "rum" has warmed me up . . . it's like cream. Your father deals in the right goods . . . a little diluted perhaps.

JACK. Worth-while people expect the best . . . dear Admiral. Why don't you send for your uniform in case you catch a chill? Can't I wireless?

MATILDA. Well, I am feeling a little cold. In the tropics it gets very cool immediately after sundown, and then warms up later.

JACK. [*Takes up the wireless receiver and shouts.*] Send the Admiral's kit ashore!

MATILDA. I shall be suspected of breaking the 18th and 19th Amendments if any of the ship's company find me here.

JACK. That's all right. [*Hands her a cigarette.*] Here you are . . . break the 20th as well!

MATILDA. I will brave their censure. The cocoanut has given me courage. [*Kisses Jack.*]

JACK. As well to be caught for a sheep as a lamb.

MATILDA. A thought has just struck me!

JACK. What is it?

MATILDA. I have not violated the 18th Amendment by drinking from this cocoanut.

JACK. No?

MATILDA. . . . or broken the 19th by kissing you.

JACK. No?

MATILDA. . . . or transgressed against the 20th by smoking this cigarette.

JACK. Really . . . so it doesn't seem so nice?

MATILDA. No, I have not. I am perfectly in order. My conduct is irreproachable. Why . . . we are outside the Three Mile Limit!

JACK. Yes, Matilda . . . you are fifty yards outside it. Tarpon Island is three miles and fifty yards from the Florida Coast . . . wont you give me another kiss before you change into your Admiral's uniform?

MATILDA. Yes, darling. [*Embraces him fondly.*]
. . . . I'll be back in a brace of shakes when I've changed into naval togs. Don't be frightened at being left alone. I gave the strictest instructions that all hands were to remain aboard the fleet so that we could enjoy complete privacy. No sailormen of the Dry Fleet will molest you. You have no cause for apprehension. No! a liberty woman from the fleet will be on Tarpon Island tonight.

JACK. Hark . . .

MATILDA. What is it?

JACK. I heard a crash in that palm thicket.

MATILDA. My suit case dropped from an aeroplane. I'll change and be back in a few minutes. That palm grove will be my boudoir. My mirror the moonlit lagoon.

JACK. No women of the Dry Fleet will cause me embarrassment while you are away?

MATILDA. No woman of the fleet dare disobey my orders and come ashore. Discipline aboard my squadron is perfect. Should I catch a woman disobeying my commands I'd string her to the yard arm or electrocute her on the "Sahara's" dynamo.

[*Throws a kiss and departs, leaving JACK alone.*]

THE SECOND ACT

ACT II

JACK. How lonely I feel . . . what a long time Admiral Matilda takes to change into uniform. Perhaps she's lost a cuff button. [*Shades his eyes and looks seawards.*] There are the great vessels of the Admiral's fleet lying at anchor with a single searchlight from the flagship playing on the straits between Tarpon Island and Florida. What would Leif Ericson the Viking, the first discoverer of America, think of such great iron vessels, twinkling with a myriad of red and white lights . . . protecting his beloved Wineland . . . and to think that Admiral Matilda Cabot who commands this great squadron of fighting ships . . . loves me . . . it would make any man proud. [*A pause.*] I always was ambitious . . . before I knew Matilda I used to wish that I were the Princess of Wales. Her mother, the Queen of England, sends her all over the world on a great battleship called the "Renown." She visits India, Canada, the United States, Egypt and Russia. The Republics of the World entertain her and fête her wherever she goes. She hunts tigers, plays polo, and sticks pigs. She is the greatest Ambassadors of the British Empire and is going to settle the Irish Question once and for all. I have a great admiration for her . . . but she cannot compare with Matilda. The Princess in part owes her greatness to an accident of birth, while Admiral Matilda Cabot has risen to her high position by sheer merit and personality. Why, her mother sold salt cod in Boston and her father, before he was married, was a telephone operator in some New York hotel . . . How I love her. [*A pause.*] I remember when I was at Harvard one Hallowe'en night I slept with a slice of wedding cake under my pillow, and strangely enough I dreamed of a woman of high rank in the naval service who solicited my hand. After all, there is some compensation in being a man in the twenty-first century. The women do show us a good time, pay for our meals at restaurants, buy us bouquets and take us out to theatres. Dear Matilda . . . dear Admiral . . . [*throws a kiss towards the palm grove*] . . . I do long to see you in your uniform . . . What a time you take to change . . . [*stops abruptly*] . . . What is that noise . . . who is there? [*Appears frightened.*]

[Enter DOUGAL and JONATHAN, arm in arm with two sailor women of the Dry Navy. The Boatswain is dressed as a sailor and the gunner in the uniform of a marine. A full "rum" bottle in yellow and two empty glasses in white, the insignia of the Prohibition Navy, are sewn on the back of the bosun's collar and on the back of the marine's tunic. These badges of the Dry Navy only become visible when the women turn their backs, which they do after the lapse of a minute or two.]

GUNNER JEMIMA. Cheery ho, my lads. Say! We are in clover. Here's where the cocoanuts grow . . . Johnny Volstead's bottles.

DOUGAL. [Noticing JACK.] I'll thank you, Jack, to absent yourself. You widnae want to play gooseberrie. We intend to hae a wee entertainment all to oorselves.

JACK. I'll go, Dougal . . . I'll go!

JONATHAN. You wont tell your father, Mr. Volstead, what we're doing?

JACK. Trust me; a man can keep a secret . . . I'm going now!

BOSUN JANE. Well some men can. Come here, my pretty lad.

[Attempts to kiss JACK, who eludes the she-Bosun's embrace and escapes.]

JACK. Admiral Matilda! Admiral Matilda! One of your sailors has tried to kiss me!

GUNNER. Let's sit down on the turf together and have a moon-light picnic.

[They all sit down in positions appropriate to such an occasion.]

BOSUN. Gunner, tell the lads how we sunk the booze ship last Monday.

GUNNER. [Modestly.] You tell them, Bosun . . . You saw the affair better than I did. You was on the bridge with Admiral Matilda.

BOSUN. There's nothing to it . . . 'twas an every-day incident . . . booze ships are plentiful in these waters. We sink them all and send them to D. Jones's locker. Heigh ho, and a bottle of rum! But I'll spin you the yarn. [Hitches up her trousers and produces a corn-cob pipe.]

GUNNER. Avast there, you old polecat. You're breaking the 20th Amend!

BOSUN. Shiver my timbers hearty. We're outside the Three Mile Limit! See that flag? This island is the property of Queen Fictitia the Fourth, Queen of England and Empress of India. [Picks up a

cocoanut.] I'll drink the old lady's health . . . gents and Gunner!

GUNNER. Coupled with that of her daughter the Princess of Wales! All together! The Princess of Wales!

BOSUN. She's a great friend of Admiral Matilda . . . they played golf together at Monte Carlo . . . when the fleet visited the Mediterranean last Fall. I acted as caddie.

DOUGAL. I hear the British battle-cruiser "Renown" with the Princess aboard is somewhere in these seas steaming for the Panama Canal en route for India. The Princess of Wales is making another tour in those parts.

BOSUN. That's true, and I have it from the Yeowoman of Signals aboard the "Sahara" that the Princess and Admiral Matilda have had many a talk together over the wireless telephone during the last few days. I should say the "Renown" at the present moment was in the 25th parallel in longitude 77.85 East, which position would place her about 150 miles from Tarpon Island. I wonder if the Princess will pay Admiral Matilda Cabot a visit.

JONATHAN. Well, the Princess of Wales has a soft job anyway . . . You ladies must be feeling dry in this tropical climate.

BOSUN. You've said a mouthful.

DOUGAL. [*Breaking open a box of cocoanuts.*] Good mountain dew of Glenlevit, lassies, from the hills and moors of bonny Scotland. The land of the Mountains, the Valleys, and the Heroes! [*Sings.*

Pherson had a Son. Married Noah's Daughter!

Nearly spoilt the Flood by drinking up the water.

I at least believe it . . . if it had have been

Mix...ed . . . with . . . Glenlevit!

BOSUN. Well sung, my lad . . . and I'll take a drop of Glenlevit.

DOUGAL. Thankee kindly!

GUNNER. What about the sinking of the booze ship, Bosun?

BOSUN. There's nothing to it, Gunner, a mere piker's job . . . She would not heave to when our Admiral fired a shot across her bows and she tried to submerge. So we sunk her with gunfire and torpedo.

GUNNER. I'll tell you a secret, Bosun.

BOSUN. Go ahead. A woman can keep a secret.

GUNNER. We missed the booze ship with the first four torpedoes and the first sixteen rounds from our big guns.

BOSUN. That was bad shooting . . .

GUNNER. I put on a new hand to lay the guns and sight the torpedo.

BOSUN. [*Interested.*] Who was she?

GUNNER. Hist. It wasn't a "she."

BOSUN. Is that so . . . a male gunner. Did he fire that peach of a shot I saw from the bridge. I didn't know we had a man on the "Sahara" . . . except . . . Clarence . . . the Admiral's typewriter.

GUNNER. It was him. *That's* the secret!

BOSUN. Gee wizz . . . I never should have dreamt it!

GUNNER. Men are certainly going some.

BOSUN. I should say they were . . . but I've heard it said that in the old days men were better shots than women. They used to practice on barn doors and haystacks.

GUNNER. [*Gallantly.*] It's something to do with their eyes. [*Looking at JONATHAN.*] Men have such pretty eyes!

BOSUN. You'd better not let on too much about Clarence's shooting. If the Admiral heard about it she'd haul you over the coals for letting a man go near the sixteen inch guns, and why if Mrs. Josephus, the Secretary of the Navy, learnt about it she'd demote us all, and put men in our places for the sake of economy.

GUNNER. Come now, Bosun, it's not as bad as that. It is not men's work to handle artillery.

[*All laugh at the idea.*]

JONATHAN. Tell us about the Battle of Tripoli, Bosun.

BOSUN. Sure, Jonathan! Give me something to wet my whistle. [*Takes a drink.*] It was this way. I'm no politician but the battle of Tripoli took place, if I'm not mistook, over the question of the 20th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States relating to the Prohibition of Tobacco. The Toorks was a trying to send shiploads of Turkish tobacco from Cavalla in Macedonia and from Smyrna in Asia Minor into Mexico with the obvious purpose of re-exporting the weed into the smokeless territory of Auntie Sam in violation of our Constitution. They got fair warning, and it was up to them! Mrs. Woodrow Harding sent the Sultana Fatima Kamel at least ten notes and three ultimatums . . .

GUNNER. What's an ultimatum . . .

BOSUN. You've got me, lass, I don't know . . . but our lady President sent three. That will be two years ago . . . the 30th of January . . . two-o-one-eight.

DOUGAL. Sounds like a telephone number!

BOSUN. The year two-o-one-eight or two thousand and eighteen

is two years ago and the Battle of Tripoli was fought on a Friday on the 30th of January, and the day after tomorrow will be its second anniversary. At the beginning of January, two-o-one-eight, Admiral Matilda Cabot's squadron was acruising off the coast of Spain watching the sherry wine vintage. Them Spaniards require some watching too! Take it from me! I was on one or two of our landing parties that blew up bodegas . . . as they call the sherry warehouses in those furring parts. We was taking no chance of any sherry being landed in America. You see we had sent Spain an ultimatum the week before. That's why we sent landing parties to blow up the bodegas!

DOUGAL. I mind that fine . . . it was two years since.

BOSUN. Well, as I just said, Admiral Matilda's squadron was cruising off Spain when instructions came from Washington, and her fleet sailed under sealed orders, which when opened at sea told us to seize the Turkish Merchant Fleet, laden with tobacco, anchored in the Bay of Tripoli in Asia Minor. The merchantmen were under strong Turkish escort comprising seven battleships and eight destroyers. Barbarossa Beava Hanem was the name of the Turkish Admiral . . . cause her dad had a red beard. The land batteries of Tripoli were strongly placed and linked up to the Toorks' squadron so that Barbarossa Beava Hanem could discharge the guns by wireless. There was 120,000 hogsheads of tobacco aboard the Turkish merchant ships awaiting to sail . . . about three years' crop of four vilayets as they call the states in those furring parts. Say . . . that was a day glorious in the history of the Dry Navy!

GUNNER. I should say it was, Bosun!

BOSUN. I was standing at attention in the conning tower of the "Sahara" awaiting orders. Admiral Matilda Cabot was looking over a chart of the Bay of Tripoli. The Turkish shells from the shore batteries was abursting all round us sending spouts of water as high as the old Hudson Bridge when they hit the sea. "Five fathoms over the bar," says Admiral Matilda, just as cool as if she waur playing chess . . . "it'll just float the "Lex Prohibita." I'll risk it, Bosun Jane," says she . . . "give me a lucky strike cigarette." "They're toasted," says I, handing her one. "So they are, Bosun," says she . . . "and so'll be the Fatimas afore I've done with them" . . . and with that she ordered our forward batteries to open on the Toorks, and they roared like thunder and belched out death and destruction on the enemy. I watched Admiral Matilda's hand as she lit the cigarette I'd given her. Did it shake? No, my lads! It was as steady as mine is now, as I hold this damned

nut . . . and then she turns to me and says, "Bosun Jane, run up Old Glory at the peak . . . it reminds me of George Washington." "You've forgotten the Dry Flag," says I . . . "Oh, hell," says she . . . "well, run it up too . . . the catspaw on it reminds me of Pussyfoot Johnson."

DOUGAL. What were the names of the vessels of Admiral Matilda Cabot's squadron?

BOSUN. She had the battleships "Sahara," "Volstead," "Vinland" and "Lex Prohibita," only four, mark you, against Admiral Barbarossa Beava's seven, although we had twelve destroyers to the Toorks' ten. Our destroyers were "A" and "B" flotillas of the Dry Navy. In squadron "A" was the "Coca Cola," "Eskimo Pie," "Beavo," "Budweiser," "Sherbert" and "Pluto." Squadron "B" was made up of the destroyers "Vermouth," "Marsala," "Gin Riky," "Mint Julep," "Absinthe" and "Hyball" . . . Admiral "Tilda" . . . we calls her "Tilda" for short . . . [*slyly*] . . . sometimes we calls her "Clarence" . . . as she's got a crush on her stenographer . . . well, as . . .

[*Enter ADMIRAL MATILDA CABOT, dressed in full uniform, medals and decorations, wearing a sword.*]

MATILDA. Has anyone seen . . . why, what does this drunken debauch mean, women? Drinking and carousing among sailors of the Dry! [*Bosun and Gunner rise to their feet with some difficulty and salute.*]

BOSUN. Beg pardon, Admiral of the Dry.

GUNNER. I didn't know, Admiral Cabot, that you was ashore.

MATILDA. You've broken ship!

BOSUN and GUNNER together. We're not the only defaulters. All the ship's crew is ashore!

DOUGAL. Can ye no hear the merry sailor lassies shouting in the cocoanut groves?

MATILDA. Silence . . . another word and I'll string you up to trees . . . you, Bosun Jane, whom I trusted, and you, Gunner Jemima. I had thought better of you. Were you not with me both at the Battle of Tripoli when we trounced the Turks. Shame on you. You'll answer for this! Have I no one in my fleet that I can rely on . . . except Clarence . . . a mere man . . . [*half draws her sword and then sheaths it with a click*] . . . Ha! Ha! consorting with bootleggers! In league perhaps with rum runners . . . You are discharged from the Dry Navy without pension!

BOSUN. Have pity, Admiral! Think of my husband and family

in Kalamazoo, Mich. He and our five young children depend upon my efforts for their support. All my life has been spent in the service of my country. I know no other job. As a girl . . . a mere flapper . . . I joined the Dry Navy.

GUNNER. And me too, lady Admiral.

MATILDA. Miserable women. You should both have thought of that before you committed so serious a breach of discipline!

BOSUN. [*On her knees.*] One day, Admiral, you will be a mother yourself. Think . . . think of my little ones!

MATILDA. [*Somewhat touched.*] Well, you are both deprived of a week's pay and lose six months' seniority. Had you not both served me well at the Battle of Tripoli, hark'ee, I'd have strung you up to trees like dead coyotes!

BOSUN and GUNNER together. May God bless you, Admiral, for a generous, kind hearted soul.

MATILDA. See that it doesn't occur again or it will go ill with you . . . Have you seen a gentleman called Jack Volstead?

ALL TOGETHER. Yes, Admiral.

MATILDA. Well, go and find him! I wish to question him on the present geographical position of Tarpon Island and if it is still inside the Three Mile Limit. If it is within the Three Mile Limit I shall hoist the Stars and Stripes and make the Island dry.

DOUGAL. Is it not rather late the night for such cross examination of Mr. Jack.

JONATHAN. Would not tomorrow be better?

MATILDA. It is my wish. Go and get him . . . he is about here somewhere. I have just seen him. [*Aside.*] Oh where is dear Jack. Could he have been molested by the drunken sailor women of the "Sahara." I ought never to have left him! [*To the others.*] Be gone and bring him to me . . . in the name of the President. Take care, bootleggers, not to anger me more or I'll keel-haul you both.

ALL TOGETHER. [*Glad to get away.*] Aye! aye! Admiral!

[*Curtain drops and rises on roseate dawn—*

MATILDA alone on stage.

MATILDA. I have spent the night in that hammock . . . well, I've often fared worse . . . but its uncomfortable to sleep in the full uniform of an Admiral of the Prohibition Navy. I've been pecked in the neck by this Serbian decoration of the Order of the White Eagle . . . and Jack did not put in an appearance . . . although I sent Bosun Jane, when she came back again about midnight, to tell him I was here . . . waiting for him in this palm grove.

The mosquitoes were terrible . . . worse than the Serbian White Eagle . . . but my love for Jack hurt me worse than mosquitoes' bites or the eagle's peck. [*Pauses and looks around.*] If I were not an Admiral I would go and search for him myself, but if I did do so my sailorwomen would think I was bent on breaking some blue law. There are so many different amendments to the Constitution since women run my country that it is difficult to know how to regulate one's conduct and not run afoul of them . . . sometimes I almost think that men did things better in the early days when Washington was President of the Republic . . . I do wonder, though, how people knew Right from Wrong in those Dark Ages with no legal signposts to show the sheep tracks from the goat tracks. [*Looks at her watch.*] I will wait another minute . . . I say that . . . but my heart tells me that I shall wait longer, so much I love the boy. How I love that youth Volstead! The thought of Clarence is submerged below the water-line of my affection. Cupid's arrows have shot me through the heart in spite of all these medals I wear, which would seem to make my breast impervious to such darts. I am waterlogged in folly. I can battle against the Turks but not against his love. My heart is enfiladed, bombed, torpedoed, broken by gunfire. I am clean put out of action and lie rocking to and fro in the trough of my emotions. If he does not come soon I shall shut myself up in the musty locker of Daisy Jones! Where is the dear one? Oh that I could envelope him in my arms . . . Oh indignity that I should be so enslaved by such a creature as a man . . . and yet I love him. Perhaps it is . . . the voice of Nature whispering in my ear . . . urging me to be a mother . . . Until now men have been my pastime . . . hark, what is that . . . oh my love, my love . . . I hear your footsteps!

[*Throws her arms around VOLSTEAD senior.*]

J.-V. You've broken my spirits on the "Rikiavik" and now you'd break my bones. Do you think you have an assignation with me . . . or do you think I am your secretary *Mister* Clarence? Say, I saw him down in the village with a couple of Janes on his arms.

MATILDA. He is nothing to me.

J.-V. In any case don't look upon me as a friend.

MATILDA. Your friendship is immaterial to me . . . bootlegger. I do not solicit it . . . or should I value it . . . and in any case I do not know who you are.

J.-V. I am John Volstead, descendant of the man who gave his name to the Prohibition Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

MATILDA. What is your business?

J.-V. You know . . . I am a bootlegger.

MATILDA. I see.

J.-V. Do you think anyone does anything else on Tarpon Island . . . except grow bottles?

MATILDA. I don't understand.

J.-V. We bootleggers call cocoanuts "bottles."

MATILDA. Do you?

J.-V. I told you I am no friend of yours.

MATILDA. You are the most truculent virago of a man I have ever met, but I think you as harmless as a chrysalis.

J.-V. They call me the "Hootch King." My family and I have run more liquor into the U. S. A. than any other wine merchants in the Bahama Islands.

MATILDA. What godsend you must have been to poor, thirsty Americans.

J.-V. Or more than any single firm of wine merchants in Canada, Mexico or Cuba.

MATILDA. I do not doubt it . . . you must have made a good thing out of the business.

J.-V. I have indeed . . . and my son Jack is the sole heir to my large fortune.

MATILDA. What has your son got to do with the conversation?

J.-V. You know.

MATILDA. Do I?

J.-V. Didn't you try to get him to meet you last night . . . in this palm grove . . . and around midnight! You've been tampering with the young man's affections. I call it scandalous. I

MATILDA. [*Cutting him short.*] Why did he not come to see me here?

J.-V. I locked him up in the house so he couldn't come . . . and he whined about it all night. Now his poor mother's dead, it's my duty to look after his upbringing.

MATILDA. [*Aside.*] Oh, poor Jack. Oh, how he does love me . . . he cried all night . . . shed tears for me.

J.-V. You have designs on his hand on account of the money he will inherit.

MATILDA. You are a dam fool.

J.-V. What?

MATILDA. I say you are a dam insular parochial minded man without refinement or culture. Your ancestor, the founder of your

house, was a prince compared to you and an honest man to boot with honest convictions . . . do you think that I, Admiral Matilda Cabot, the idol of the great American people, would marry a boot-legger's son for money. [*Aside.*] Ah . . . I might marry him for love. [*Loud.*] Do you think that I, the conqueror of the Turks at the Battle of Tripoli, could not marry a Rockereller, an Astor, or a Vanderbilt, or a Ford . . .

J.-V. Or a Pierce Arrow.

MATILDA. None of your impertinence. Enough of this idle talk. Where is your son?

J.-V. He is under lock and key in my villa.

MATILDA. [*Aside.*] No wonder the Bosun couldn't bring him . . . but she'll get him out yet if I know her properly. I hope she will keep this matter secret. I should not like my private affairs to be known aboard the fleet. I think she can keep a secret though. [*Turning to J.-V.*] You say your son Jack is locked up. In what room is he confined?

J.-V. I've shut him in his bedroom . . . perhaps he might go and dance with your officers. They're at it already this morning down in the village . . . you're a gay lot, you dry navyites.

MATILDA. You do Jack a grave injustice. He would not . . .

J.-V. Would not what?

MATILDA. Would not dance with anybody but me.

J.-V. The idol of America, the conqueror of the Turks.

MATILDA. Well, am I not? [*Blows a whistle.*] We shall see!

[*Enter BOSUN and GUNNER. MATILDA seats herself at a camp table. The sailors stand at attention behind her.*

J.-V. is standing facing her across the table somewhat ill at ease . . . and feigning a courageous attitude.

BOSUN. [*Saluting.*] Dispatches from the Secretary of the Navy, Admiral. [*Hands her a love epistle from Jack.*

ADMIRAL. Excuse me a minute while I look over these dispatches. They are of the utmost importance. [*Aside, reading the letter.*] . . . "Darling, I could not sleep; I was all a tremble thinking of you . . . my father has locked me in my room to prevent me seeing you, but I will escape . . . I will climb down the blossom-laden creeper that blooms near my window. Love laughs at locksmiths." Climb down the blossom-laden creeper and come to me! Oh, darling Jack . . . dear Jack . . .

BOSUN. [*Saluting.*] Any answer to the Secretary of the Navy, Admiral.

MATILDA. Tell her . . . tell her, Bosun Jane, that the Ad-

miral of the Prohibition Navy will be waiting for her at the appointed rendezvous . . . in the Caribbean Sea . . . [*Aside to Bosun.*] . . . "Neath the shade of the sheltering palm."

[*Bosun salutes and disappears for a minute.*]

J.-V. What do you intend to do?

MATILDA. I intend to ask you a few questions. Until you have answered them you are placed under close arrest.

J.-V. What for?

MATILDA. Cocoanuts.

J.-V. Tarpon Island is outside the Three Mile Limit. The Island is a British possession. Your action is illegal.

MATILDA. I am not so sure about that. Do you know the provisions of the Haines-Punchford Treaty between the United States and Great Britain?

J.-V. Of course I do. I am the proprietor of Tarpon Island. The Haines-Punchford Treaty affects my interests as owner.

MATILDA. Wherein lies the value of this island to you, its proprietor? Is it agriculture?

J.-V. I will be perfectly frank with you.

MATILDA. By all means. [*Lights a cigarette.*] Let me hear your views.

J.-V. Tarpon Island has little or no agricultural possibilities . . . but as a base for bootlegging it is unrivalled.

MATILDA. I know why . . . but I should be interested to hear an expression of opinion from so successful a bootlegger as you are. Mr. Volstead. Proceed . . . if you please.

J.-V. This island is today exactly three miles and fifty yards from the coast of Florida. When my grandfather purchased it in the late seventies of last century it was several miles further away from the United States . . . at least two miles . . . but in the fifty years that have elapsed since then, the mainland has approached the island and the island has approached the mainland . . . the work of drifting sandbanks. As a navigator you must be aware that the configuration of these coasts is always changing . . . and every few years they have to be recharted.

MATILDA. That is true. I know it.

J.-V. In other words the British Island and the United States have been approaching each other.

MATILDA. A getting together of England and America . . . symbolic of the good relations that exist between *our* two countries, Mr. Volstead.

J.-V. I am an American I hope.

MATILDA. Only a British subject for business purposes. Eh?

J.-V. That's correct. I will be perfectly frank with you . . . but I detest your dam Blue Laws regulating drinking, kissing and smoking. Ah, woman-made stuff . . . the old cats!

MATILDA. And yet you turn the first mentioned category of laws to considerable profit, Mr. Volstead. Do you bootleg tobacco as well?

J.-V. No! There's not much profit in it.

MATILDA. Let me give you an idea. If you are really outside the Three Mile Limit . . . and mind you I don't admit it for a moment, why not use Tarpon Island as a winter resort. The privileges would be enjoyed by visitors wintering in Florida. Think of it. Immunity from punishment for kissing out of doors and out of wedlock.

J.-V. Oh, you're joking. Nobody pays any attention to that law. Didn't you try to kiss me in mistake for Clarence?

MATILDA. [*Angered.*] I did not. Another word of such base calumny and I'll slit your tongue like that of a talking jackdaw. Let me proceed with this official examination.

J.-V. Well, I'll answer you.

MATILDA. When were your last measurements made of the water between this island and the mainland?

J.-V. The straits were surveyed six months ago, at my request.

MATILDA. By whom?

J.-V. Hutchins and Mutchins of Miami.

MATILDA. You are fully aware of the provisions of the Haines-Punchford Treaty.

J.-V. I have already told you so.

MATILDA. Let me refresh your memory, Mr. Volstead.

J.-V. You can if you like.

MATILDA. The treaty was arranged to prevent any possible rupture between the United States and Great Britain. It disposed of the difficult and unusual position of Tarpon Island, the real name of which is San Juan de Biscayo, one of the most knotty problems that has ever exercised the wits of international jurists. Here was a possession which had been held by the English since Admiral Mordaunt took it from the Spaniards in the year 1648, an island so unimportant as to be almost lost sight of in the maps of the British Colonial Office . . . a mere sand-bar around a spur of coral rock with a few palm trees . . . and unimportant Tarpon Island would have remained, probably forever, if the Dry Laws in the United States had not focussed upon it the glare of political limelight. Somewhere around 1922, in last century, it became the

haunt of bootleggers who found the island a sure refuge on foreign soil, where they could collect liquor, and smuggle it across the narrow straits into U. S. A. territory. In those days this could be done all the more readily as no adequate naval force had been detailed by America to prevent the running of tobacco and liquor.

J.-V. Tobacco was not prohibited till 1944.

MATILDA. I stand corrected . . . but to conclude I might say that in 1922 there was no great Prohibition Navy as there is today . . . only a few discarded submarine chasers, left over from the Great War.

J.-V. Go on . . . you make me sick.

MATILDA. Silence!

J.-V. All right.

MATILDA. In 1986 the women of the Western States collected ten million dollars to purchase Tarpon Island from the British government . . . and clean it up . . . for they saw in this island an alcoholic menace to the purity of the American people.

J.-V. Six millions, you mean!

MATILDA. The amount is unimportant.

J.-V. It was six millions.

MATILDA. I say it was ten . . . but in any case the offer to buy the sovereign rights of the island was declined by the British Crown, as it is the policy of the British Empire never to sell their real estate. What happened? In deference to a popular outcry in America it was agreed by England that Tarpon Island should automatically become American when the drifting sand banks of the Florida coast and changing configuration of the coast line, to which you have just referred, brought the island inside the Three Mile Limit . . . it was further agreed and covenanted by this famous pact, that Penguin Island, a U. S. possession in Alaska, should be given to Great Britain in exchange for Tarpon Island. Such are the main provisions of the Haines-Punchford Treaty.

J.-V. Well, what about it?

MATILDA. Only this . . . that last August I received instructions from Washington to remeasure the straits on my next visit to Tarpon Island and hoist the American flag if the hydrographical survey showed three miles or less of water at high tide between the island and the coast of Florida. Of course Great Britain will raise the Union Jack over Penguin Island . . . and she is anxious to do so as a gold mine has been discovered there recently.

J.-V. So you would ruin my business by making Tarpon Island dry!

MATILDA. I have only my instructions to carry out. A party from the battleship "Lex Prohibita" is measuring the straits this morning.

J.-V. If you wish to be my daughter-in-law . . .

MATILDA. You cannot tempt me . . . Jack . . .

J.-V. But . . . we can do a trade . . .

MATILDA. I place duty above everything, besides . . . I do not require your consent.

J.-V. Take heed, I am not the milk-sop father you think me. I am a desperate man . . . but I make you this offer . . .

MATILDA. [*Cutting him short.*] Bosun, ring up the "Lex Prohibita" and ascertain if the measurements of the straits are completed. If so, I wish to know them. I ordered them to be made at daybreak.

BOSUN. [*Telephoning.*] Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy! Hey! Ship Ahoy S...h...i...p!...A...h...o...y! Don't cut me off. Is that the "Lex Prohibita".....S...h...i...p ahoy! I don't want the Bootleggers Club at Palm Beach . . . I want the battleship "Lex Prohibita" of the P . . . Pro . . . Prohibition Navy. . . Ship Ahoy! "Lex Prohibita" . . . Admiral's compliments to Captain Susan Jones and what's the measurements of the straits between Tarpon Island and the mainland?

VOICE. [*After several seconds' pause.*] Three mile less five foot.

BOSUN. Three miles less five foot. [*Throws her corn cob pipe away upon hearing that Tarpon Island is in smokeless territory.*]

MATILDA. You hear that, Mr. Volstead. Tarpon Island is five feet inside the Three Mile Limit.

GUNNER. Shall I seize his flask?

MATILDA. Whatever for . . . are you a pickpocket?

GUNNER. Aren't we dry, Admiral!

MATILDA. [*Taking no notice of the GUNNER's remark.*] Mr. Volstead, you will take this as my official intimation that Tarpon Island will shortly become a United States possession and that you will therefore be very soon subject to its laws, prohibitory and otherwise.

J.-V. This is the most terrible day in my life!

MATILDA. I am sorry for you, Mr. Volstead . . . but I must carry out my orders from Washington. British law still holds on the Island until the American Flag is formally hoisted.

[*Bosun picks up her corn cob pipe.*]

J.-V. This is the worst news I have had for many a day!

MATILDA. You are wealthy. You can retire from your bootlegging business.

J.-V. And go and live in some woman-ridden State in the Middle West. Never!

MATILDA. [*Kindly.*] You love Tarpon Island?

J.-V. Indeed I do and I love my trade. I am an honest bootlegger trading in good honest liquor . . . that don't give you next morning a feeling of the night before. Here on this Island I am free from the eternal feminine and its World dominion. I am a bootlegger. I glory in it. My father was a bootlegger. My grandfather was a bootlegger! This Island . . . its palm trees . . . the blue sea around it . . . my hootch cellars . . . all . . . everything, is part of me, is "Home Sweet Home."

MATILDA. You are at liberty to go.

[Exit JOHN VOLSTEAD, showing great grief and anger. MATILDA, BOSUN and GUNNER seem somewhat touched. Enter JACK . . . Exit BOSUN and GUNNER.]

JACK. I have climbed down the blossom-laden creeper and here I am.

MATILDA. Oh, Jack . . . how brave of you! You might have broken your limbs!

JACK. Well, I nearly did.

MATILDA. You have broken my heart by your long absence.

JACK. See, I have written you a sonnet . . . to repair it!

MATILDA. [Reading it.] What exquisite poetry! The Poet Laureate of England is a piker compared to you.

JACK. I am so glad you like it. I wrote it last night.

MATILDA. [Still reading.] This verse is divine. I read a lot of poetry about myself after our great victory at Tripoli. It appeared in all the newspapers and periodicals in America . . . but it was not in the same class as your sonnet.

JACK. Oh, my darling. What a beautiful thing to say . . . I love you so. I did not sleep a wink last night. I was thinking of you all the time. If my father had not locked me in my bedroom . . .

MATILDA. Did the sailor women of the Dry Navy frighten you?

JACK. I ran off quickly . . . when they came with my father's two henchmen, Dougal and Jonathan.

MATILDA. But the women did you no harm.

JACK. One of them tried to kiss me.

MATILDA. What!

JACK. Don't be so angry . . . she was only in a playful mood. I ran away quickly. What a noise the drunken sailor women of the Dry Navy made last night.

MATILDA. Well, we must make some allowance for their conduct. The Fleet has been on a long cruise. The sea is not a bed of roses even in these days when each sailor-woman in the U. S. Navy

has a bathroom to herself. It is the only time that such a breach of discipline has occurred on a ship of my squadron. The first thing I did when I woke up this morning was to telephone that a Court of Inquiry should be held. No shore leave will be allowed on the ships while my squadron is here. Kiss me, pet!

JACK. You must be made of iron!

MATILDA. Why? Do my lips feel like metal?

JACK. You are so severe to the sailors.

MATILDA. Discipline must be maintained!

JACK. And yet, dear Admiral, you are so sweet. I love to feel that you rule me.

MATILDA. A woman should always rule a man.

JACK. Y-e-s.

MATILDA. [*Putting her arm 'round JACK.*] Darling . . . will . . . will you marry me?

JACK. This is so sudden!

MATILDA. You mean "yes."

JACK. Of course, dear.

MATILDA. Oh, I feel in the Seventh Heaven.

JACK. I am enveloped in a golden cloud. What ecstasy. My feet do not seem to touch the ground!

[*A pause.*]

MATILDA. We will be married after the Spring manoeuvres.

JACK. How lovely. I count the minutes.

MATILDA. And then, sweetheart, we will embark aboard the "Sahara" for a cruise in the Mediterranean.

JACK. And I shall be the Admiral's "hubby."

MATILDA. As such you will be received by Royalty.

JACK. I, a bootlegger's son.

MATILDA. A husband's position is that of his wife.

JACK. How stupid of me not to remember. I shall have to read up a book on etiquette.

MATILDA. Yes, you have a good head on you. [*Pats his head.*] You'll pass muster with a little practice.

JACK. Shall I see the Queen of Spain?

MATILDA. Yes . . . and the Sultana of Turkey.

JACK. How nice. Must I kiss their hands?

MATILDA. You will visit the Vatican. All the Royalty of Europe will entertain us in their palaces!

JACK. Above all others I'd love to see the Princess of Wales.

MATILDA. [*An idea seizing her.*] Why, she shall be best-woman at our wedding. I'll postpone the Spring manoeuvres of the fleet,

as they will spoil our honeymoon, and our marriage shall take place right away. It's too good a chance to miss. [*Rushes to telephone.*] Give me Her Majesty's Ship "Renown."

VOICE. I am the yeoman of signals!

MATILDA. Admiral Matilda Cabot speaking. Put me on to the Princess of Wales.

VOICE. Aye! Aye! Admiral.

MATILDA. Is that you, Wales, old Top?

VOICE. I am the Princess of Wales. [*Recognizing MATILDA's voice.*] How are you, old thing! Where are you?

MATILDA. Referring to the Haines-Punchford Treaty, Tarpon Island is now inside the Three Mile Limit. Can you come and haul down the flag?

VOICE. All right, my old Benbow. Take the bally place. Penguin Island'll do England A1. Just discovered a gold mine there. I'll come and arrange the transfer.

MATILDA. Say, Wales, will you be best-woman at my wedding? I'm going to be married tomorrow.

VOICE. Delighted, old thing. Congrats! How's the tarpon fishing?

MATILDA. Fine! [*Rings off . . . turning to JACK.*] You see I fixed that up all right.

JACK. [*With admiration in his eyes.*] Wonderful . . . wonderful! You have arranged for the Princess of Wales to be best-woman at our wedding . . . but can't she stay here a week or so? . . . I'm sure my father would like to entertain her at his villa.

MATILDA. Why do you say that, Jack?

JACK. Well, isn't tomorrow a little too soon for our wedding, only twenty-four hours' engagement! What about my trousseau?

MATILDA. Nonsense Jack . . . you are a sailor's fiancé. A sailor cannot stand delay.

JACK. Well, of course I consent. How could I do otherwise? You have such a masterful way, darling. When will the "Renown" be here?

MATILDA. Tomorrow morning at daybreak. You will be awakened by the salute of guns.

JACK. I shall not sleep a wink. I shall be dreaming of my wedding and the Princess of Wales being best-woman. [*Takes out a small mirror and powder puff from a vanity bag.*]

MATILDA. Oh yes you will. You have arrears of sleep to make up after last night . . . Lets' go for a stroll around the Island. We have such a lot to talk about . . . and this afternoon you shall

come and take tea aboard my flagship. It will be an opportunity to announce our engagement to the officers of the fleet. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter JOHN VOLSTEAD, somewhat inebriated, carrying an aerial torpedo.*]

J.-V. That damned she-Admiral! I'll get her. Going to take Tarpon Island away from me and marry my son Jack as well. I'll sink her blasted flagship, the "Sahara." It's a dam lie that we're inside the Three Mile Limit, which makes us inside the United States. The cockeyed Admiral and her female surveyors are mistaken. In the good old days, when men were men, a woman couldn't be trusted to measure a yard of cloth properly . . . and as for shooting, Hells Bells, they couldn't hit a haystack or a barn door. Well, they had to get *Clarence* to sink the booze-ship. Ha! Ha! He was boasting of it up in the village. What days we live in . . . and women tell me I'm a reactionary. Hells Bells! Hells Bells! With this torpedo and its charge of high explosive I'll sink the "Sahara" under the sea . . . if she hasn't grounded on the empty bottles that her booze-fighting sea she hussies cast overboard. Hells Bells! she'll be dryer below water than above it. She's the biggest b . . . b . . . booze ship on the ocean. I'll drop it on her from my aer-aer-aeroplane if she's not grounded on the bottles and blow all the she-sea she-sea she-sea s . . . h . . . s . . . h hussies aboard her into a boozeless hereafter. Drop this dam t-t-t-torpedo down the smokestack of the "Sahara" from my Brown Bessie. Sure as my name's Volstead. It'll stir up her innards! Wish, wish my illustrious Ancestor could see me. She'll blow up like the Maine! Say . . . where's my flying . . . gog . . . goggles? [*Lays down the aerial torpedo and leaves the stage for a moment.*]

[*Enter DOUGAL.*]

DOUGAL. What devil's mischief is the boss up to now? I saw an ugly look in his eye when he told me that the Admiral said we was inside the United States and dry from now on. Eh mon, from the presence of yon aerial torpedo I judge he's contemplating mischief. I shouldna like to see Mr. Volstead get into trouble with the authorities. [*Unscrews the torpedo and takes out of it a red ball of T.N.T., or some high explosive, resembling a croquet-ball.*] Noo, I've taken the sting out of the iron hornet! Where can I put this . . . it's no for nothing I wrought in a munition factory in Glasgow afore I took to bootlegging. I'll lay this bomb in the hammock for safety and put a wee flask of whusky in its place . . . eh mon, but it's a sair waste o' guid liquor. [*Places whiskey-filled cocoanut in the torpedo in place of the charge of high explosive and screws it*

up.] If I do nae do anither stroke of work the day, I'm thinking it's a day weel spent. Mister Volstead's been a good boss to me and I wouldna like to see him in trouble . . .

[Enter BOSUN and GUNNER with red badges on their sleeves, showing that they are detailed as shore police for the day.]

BOSUN. My lad, I arrest you! *[Collars DOUGAL.]*

DOUGAL. What for?

GUNNER. We saw you open that case of liquor on American soil.

BOSUN. Inside the Three Mile Limit!

GUNNER. You will be confined on the "Sahara" till the Admiral decides what to do with you. You may be a day or two in the ship's cell before your case comes up for trial. It's a serious offence! I'll collect some of the evidence. *[Both pick up as many cocoanuts as they can carry.]*

DOUGAL. I'm thinking you're a little preemeeture! The British flag's no been hauled down yet . . . and we're no subject to ony of your Dry Laws till you've hoisted the Stars and Stripes.

BOSUN. *[Dragging off DOUGAL.]* We'll see what we'll see. I tell you that you're inside the Three Mile Limit. We're the naval police of the day and it's for us to judge.

GUNNER. No booze allowed, Scottie . . . Quick . . . march . . .

[Exit BOSUN and GUNNER with prisoner.]

[Enter JOHN VOLSTEAD with an airman's mask and goggles which he dons in full view of the audience. He takes the aerial torpedo, hangs it on the rear of the plane, and gives the aeroplane propeller a turn or two.]

J.-V. *[Shaking his fist seawards.]* Hells Bells! Hells Bells! Hells Bells! I'll sink the "Sahara," I'll sink her and her she sea Admiral or my name's not John Volstead.

[Exit pushing off plane.]



THE THIRD ACT

ACT III.

[PRINCESS OF WALES *appears with a fishing rod. She is dressed in white with a short skirt.*

PRINCESS OF WALES. What a rummy place this is . . . Tarpon Island . . . let me see, its real name is San Juan de . . . something or other . . . I can't remember what it is . . . my mother, the Queen, has so many possessions . . . I can't remember all their names, although I used to collect postage stamps Well, it is a rummy place. I thought I should find somebody to row me out tarpon fishing. By Jove, it's nice to get away from that awful crowd on the "Renown" . . . I had a brain wave and gave 'em all the slip this morning before breakfast . . . and jumped on the pinnacle that was sent ashore to buy fresh vegetables . . . awfully good idea of mine . . . it is difficult to get away from 'em all . . . they think because I'm the Princess of Wales that I'm always getting into danger. [*Sits down in the hammock and plays with red ball of T.N.T. explosive.*] Have the unfortunate islanders nothing better to do than play croquet . . . well, I don't think much of this place . . . however, it will be nice to see my dear old American friend, Admiral Matilda Cabot. It will be absolutely ripping. I like the jaunty way that she tilts her cap on the side of her head like the pictures of Admiral Beatty in our ballroom at Balmoral Castle. I feel so fed up rotating 'round the World and meeting all sorts of impossible potentates . . . it will be a change to meet somebody really nice like Matilda. Oh, she is a dear . . . not like the crusty old English Admirals with one foot in the grave . . . and the other on . . . a cocoanut. [*Trips over a nut but does not let the ball of T.N.T. fall. Picks up cocoanut and puts back the bomb into the hammock.*] There can be nothing so refreshing in the early morning as the nice, juicy milk of a tropical cocoanut . . . except, of course, a nice cup of tea . . . and I missed my breakfast this morning. A bit of all right, I should say. [*Tastes it.*] Why, the milk has fermented. What a pity.

[*Throws down the nut in disgust.*

[*Enter DOUGAL.*

DOUGAL. It's a bonny sunrise across the Caribbean Sea the morn-

ing, my lassie . . . and now who will you be?

PRINCESS. Oh, I'm Miss Windsor.

DOUGAL. You'll be from abroad?

PRINCESS. My good man, can you row a boat? I've conceived an idea to go out tarpon fishing.

DOUGAL. Let's see your hooks [*Examines them.*] They wouldnae catch a sprat or a finnan haddie!

PRINCESS. Perhaps you can recommend me to the nearest tackle shop.

DOUGAL. [*Laughing.*] My lady, there's no a store on the island. There's Mr. Volstead's house, about fifteen nigger shacks, and a coon church! That's a'!

PRINCESS. Well, it is a rummy place. You know I thought it was a rummy place.

DOUGAL. You've said a mouthful.

PRINCESS. [*Aside.*] An historic remark.

DOUGAL. It's the sair truth, lady. It is a rummy island, for we'er all bootleggers here. Ha! Ha!

PRINCESS. How interesting! Are you one? Tell me all about it! I do love smugglers.

DOUGAL. You'll no be a Prohibition Officer?

PRINCESS. [*Amused and delighted.*] Do I look like one?

DOUGAL. By your accent, I'd say you was English . . . and even if you are, I'm glad to meet you . . . for to a puir exile from the old country like myself it's the next best thing to seeing a Scot. You're a right, bonny lassie. What part of England do you hail from?

PRINCESS. Windsor on the Thames, near London.

DOUGAL. That'll be where the Queen of England resides.

PRINCESS. She lives in Windsor Castle.

DOUGAL. I've no use for her . . . she's a cross old besom, and they say she's too fond of gin!

PRINCESS. I think she prefers Oporto.

DOUGAL. But she's a domfine daughter.

PRINCESS. Which one . . . Her Majesty has eight children, seven daughters, and one son—the Prince Royal.

DOUGAL. Why the Princess of Wales, of course . . . she's a fair charmer.

PRINCESS. I got up early to catch tarpon.

DOUGAL. You've been misinformed . . . it's no the tarpon season.

PRINCESS. Well, whatever is there to do in this rotten place?

What about shooting? Is there any surf-riding such as I enjoyed in the Hawaiian Islands? Any chance to get some gators?

DOUGAL. [*Looking at her feet.*] Have you left your spats in London?

PRINCESS. I mean an alligator . . . alligators.

DOUGAL. There naen hereabouts. Maybe you would like to shoot a blind tiger or two of Mr. Volstead's.

PRINCESS. Nonsense. Tigers do not live in the Bahama Islands.

DOUGAL. That's so. I was talking through my hat, lady.

PRINCESS. Well, take me out in that boat. I'd like to catch a few redsnappers before breakfast.

[*They jump into boat.*]

DOUGAL. [*As he pushes off the boat.*] The worst of these fishing parties is that some dam fool always wants to fish. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter JOHN VOLSTEAD with his head bandaged with a red bandana handkerchief.*]

J.-V. Hell's bells . . . it was a dud . . . the aerial torpedo failed to explode and I crashed to earth on my return flight. The bomb dropped right on the Admiral's quarters on the flagship "Sahara" . . . and I could see as I looked down that it disturbed a tea party Admiral Matilda was giving. Well . . . I was a bit tight at the time . . . but not too drunk to hide the license number of my aereoplane . . . fortunately it is one of those mass production Ford aeroplanes . . . and there are so many of them flying around they'll never suppose it was my good old "Brown Bessie" up aloft there! [*Pats a propeller blade affectionately.*] I've missed the Admiral once but Hell's Bells if I don't get even with her soon my name's not John Volstead . . . we Volsteads are hard to beat. I must think of some plan. [*Appears wrapped in thought.*] My ancestor put it over America . . . I'll put it over Admiral Matilda Cabot . . . Hell's Bells! I'll get even with her yet. [*A pause.*] Why, I'll hide my son Jack so that she can't find him . . . I'll lock him in a wine cellar . . . under my feet . . . the old cellar that my father Oley Volstead dug in the coral rock as a rum warehouse . . . She loves him so much that I shall be able to dictate my own terms . . . and she will remeasure the straits with more precision. Hey Jack . . . Jack!

[*Enter JACK.*]

JACK. Here I am, Father!

J.-V. Come with me!

JACK. Don't be angry with me, Father. It's my wedding day!

J.-V. I tell you that you're not going to marry Admiral Cabot . . . till I say the word.

JACK. Why the Princess of Wales is to be best woman at my marriage. I . . . I . . . I want to go and dress. Our wedding is fixed for two o'clock this afternoon.

J.-V. It's now seven in the morning . . . and you have seven hours. I don't say you wont be married to the Admiral . . . perhaps this afternoon . . . but I'm going to arrange the marriage settlement . . . and I'm going to start the work by locking you in Oley Volstead's hootch cellar. D'y see? Come along!

JACK. I want to go and dress.

J.-V. I'll dress you. I'll dress you. If your mother were alive she'd beat you up. Sure . . . she would. She did it to me. [*Drags him off.*]

JACK. I hear the guns of the "Renown" saluting the Dry Fleet. What will Admiral Cabot say? My wedding day! My wedding day! Help me, Matilda! Help me . . . to the rescue . . . to the rescue. My father's going to lock me in a hootch . . . hootch cellar. I shall die from the fumes.

J.-V. No fear, lad. You've been brought up among fumes . . . fed on fumes . . . it wont hurt you to smell them. [*Pushes open a trap door down which they both disappear. Head and shoulders of J.-V. reappear. He brandishes a large key.*] She'll have to remeasure the straits before she gets Jack. [*After an interval of a few seconds J.-V. emerges from the cellar and relocks the trap door, which he hides with brushwood.*]

Exit J.-V., shaking his fist towards the sea where the Dry Fleet is at anchor.

[*Enter BOSUN and GUNNER carrying flags and pennants with which they proceed to decorate the scene. Among the bunting they carry are American and British flags as well as the Royal Ensign of England and the Dry Flag. The last mentioned shows a yellow bottle and two empty glasses in white on a blue ground, with a catspaw above the bottle.*]

[*Enter JONATHAN.*]

JONATHAN. What have you done to Dougal . . . it's a shame the way you treated him . . . he's as honest a bootlegger as sails these seas.

BOSUN. Well, duty is duty, isn't it . . . anyhow the Admiral ordered his release. We admit we were mistaken in arresting him for breaking the Blue Laws. Admiral says we're still on British territory . . . until the Stars and Stripes is hoisted.

JONATHAN. Why all these decorations?

GUNNER. Admiral's orders, my lad.

JONATHAN. Is that so?

BOSUN. Yes, sir! Her Most Gracious Highness the Princess of Wales will be here in a few minutes. [*Plants a flag-pole.*]

JONATHAN. What's the flag-pole for, Bosun?

BOSUN. America is going to take possession of Tarpon Island in exchange for Penguin Island in Alaska and the British flag is to be lowered by her Most Gracious Highness the Princess of Wales. Guess her Momma, the Queen of England, has made a good bargain . . . why there's a gold mine on Penguin Island

GUNNER. Gold mine . . . why, the whole Island's pure gold . . . except the guano and penguins' eggs . . . bargain . . . I should say! Those Britishers put it over us every time . . . well, I will hand it to them . . . they're mighty slick!

JONATHAN. I hear we're inside the Three Mile Limit

BOSUN. You sure are . . . five feet. And when the British flag is hauled down . . . no hip pocket tricks . . . or I'll frisk you for booze.

JONATHAN. But there's no flag flying on the pole.

BOSUN. I'll see to that. [*Hauls up the Union Jack.*] These Britishers hadn't a respectable flag on the Island. I took this out of the "Saraha's" flag locker for the ceremony.

GUNNER. It's up-side down! I know cause I used to be yeo-woman of signals aboard the old "Waterspout."

BOSUN. [*Looking at the flag critically.*] I don't see any difference.

GUNNER. I don't suppose it will be noticed by the Princess of Wales.

BOSUN. You and me, shipmate, are the only two sailor-women allowed ashore from the squadron. Our Admiral has stopped all shore leave of the Dry Fleet . . . both for officers and women. All the women broke ship my hearty and the Admiral says conducted themselves worse than we did. Every woman Jill of them has lost two years' seniority

GUNNER. So that makes us the gainers of eighteen months' seniority.

BOSUN. Wont our husbands be proud of us when they hear the news!

GUNNER. They say the British ship out there is manned by men. . . . I mean half manned by men and half manned by women.

BOSUN. That is so . . . but of course it's only the junior

ratings aboard the "Renown" that are men. The able seamen are all women!

GUNNER. Those Britishers are still so old fashioned. They stick to booze like barnacles to a ship's bottom!

BOSUN. Think of it! Men sailors. What is the world coming to? Women's rights are being infringed upon. Men should be ashore pushing baby carriages!

GUNNER. [*Looking at Jonathan.*] And go carts.

BOSUN. And perambulators.

GUNNER. I suppose the employment of men in the British Navy is a sop to the male voters. Why, in the good old U. S. A. the women disfranchised the men fifty years ago!

BOSUN. When we stopped their booze and tobacco they sure did lose heart.

GUNNER. I hear it said that in England unmarried men have the right to vote between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five.

BOSUN. Subject to certain restrictions.

GUNNER. That's so . . . say, will the English sailor lads be allowed ashore?

BOSUN. No, mate . . . nary a one of them . . . I hear shore leave is suspended on the "Renown."

GUNNER. More's the pity. There some pretty pieces of baggage among the English sailor lads.

BOSUN. I was looking over Mother Cary's chickens as we call 'em with by binoculars before breakfast.

GUNNER. The English lads have good complexions. They don't use rouge.

BOSUN. It's the climate of England that does it . . . Hist! Here's the Admiral and the Princess of Wales.

[*Enter MATILDA, the PRINCESS OF WALES, JOHN VOLSTEAD, DOUGAL and PUTAN TAKE, the last a Hindu man-servant in gorgeous oriental costume. J.-V. is somewhat inebriated but sobers gradually during the ceremony.*]

PRINCESS. Admiral meet my man-servant Putan Take. He can make a wonderful rice curry.

MATILDA. [*Shaking hands.*] Mighty pleased to meet you.

PRINCESS. [*Aside.*] I was taught to be democratic . . . so I introduce everybody to everybody. There's no harm if their hands are washed. [*She shakes hands all 'round. Addressing Bosun.*] I see you wear the Tripoli medal, my brave woman. A glorious battle. [*Recognizing her.*] Ah! Bosun Jane! Did you not caddie for us at Monte Carlo? [*Turning to Admiral Matilda.*] I'd have given

a year of my life to have been there with you at the Battle of Tripoli where you trounced the Turks. [*Recollecting herself.*] Of course the Sultana of Turkey is Calipha of Islam and my august Mother rules over three hundred million Mohammedan subjects, so I bear no ill will at all to the Turks . . . but I love excitement and danger. [*Walks up to the hammock and plays with the red ball of T. N. T. explosive. Putan Take unties a parcel he has been carrying and holds up a leopard skin which he presents to Admiral Matilda with a beautiful Eastern bow.*]

MATILDA. What a wonderful skin!

PRINCESS. A present for you, Admiral. I shot this cat in India. It is a cheetah.

MATILDA. Thanks, Princess. It will look fine in my card room. They say cheetahs are most ferocious.

PRINCESS. I love danger.

DOUGAL. For God's sake dinna drop that red ball.

MATILDA. Keep perfectly still, Princess, you are in danger.

PRINCESS. Is there a snake? [*Makes as if to throw the ball of T. N. T. at an imaginary one. All run out except the Admiral and the Princess who both keep perfectly cool.*] What's the matter?

MATILDA. Princess, keep cool! In your hand you hold a bomb which if detonated by concussion will blow you and all of us to kingdom come.

PRINCESS. Thanks, Admiral . . . after what you have told me I am unlikely to drop it. I wonder how it got here.

MATILDA. The women of my fleet *will* leave these things about. I've even known them smoking in the powder magazine of my flag-ship. Give me the torpedo charge.

PRINCESS. Here it is.

MATILDA. [*Taking it.*] Most deplorable carelessness. Someone shall suffer for this. I'll hold a court martial . . . Now it's harmless. I have removed the detonator and fuse.

PRINCESS. I thought it was a croquet ball . . . another near escape from death to enter in my diary. I feel in as good a humor as if I had shot a tiger from the howdah of an elephant.

[*Seeing the danger is over all re-enter.*]

MATILDA. The flagstaff is over there. Is it your pleasure that we transfer Tarpon Island?

PRINCESS. Of course, my dear Admiral. Naturally the cession of the Island precedes the marriage ceremony. I appreciate so fully, my dear Matilda, that you would like to be married on American soil.

It has certain advantages . . . the State of Nevada . . . I hear . . . and Reno, its capital.

DOUGAL. It will be a dry wedding then, lady Princess.

PRINCESS. A British ship is British soil . . . you shall have the wedding dinner on the "Renown."

MATILDA. Well, now isn't that fine. [*Aside.*] I wonder where Jack is. Surely he can't be far off. I thought he would come to the ceremony. I suppose he is dressing for the wedding. In any case it is said to be unlucky for the bride to see the bridegroom before the ceremony on their marriage day. An old superstition that doesn't cut much ice with me, but it may with Jack . . . he's a man!

PRINCESS. I'll ask the captain of the "Renown" to steam at least three miles away from the coast of Tarpon Island . . . so that we can toast the bride and bridegroom with champagne . . . without breaking the law! You Americans become martyrs for ideals. Now for the ceremony of lowering the flag.

J.-V. It's illegal. I pro-pro-test!

DOUGAL. Hoots man! You get a million dollars compensation from the insurance company the moment the island's transferred and loses its wet privileges.

BOSUN. Silence!

PRINCESS. Are any colonists of the Crown Colony of Tarpon Island present? [*She assumes a very serious air.*]

[JOHN VOLSTEAD, DOUGAL and JONATHAN step forward. PRINCESS salutes the flag and all present do likewise and stand to attention.]

PRINCESS. Who hoisted that flag? Why it's upside down!

BOSUN. I did, lady!

PRINCESS. Tarpon Island is flying the signal of distress.

DOUGAL. Well, it's going dry. Is that no a sound and sufficient reason?

PRINCESS. Will you be good enough, my brave boatswain, to hoist the flag properly?

BOSUN. Aye! Aye! Princess. [*Does so.*]

PRINCESS. With your permission, Admiral, I will address a few words to these good colonists before we proceed to exchange Tarpon Island for Penguin Island.

MATILDA. Go ahead, Princess.

PRINCESS. [*Addressing J.-V., Dougal, and Jonathan.*] Worthy colonists! You stand at an outpost of the British Empire, an Empire upon which the sun never sets! Laborious must have been your toil among the cocoanut groves of this barren island, and small

indeed must have been your recompense in worldly goods . . . but yours has been a great work. Without your constant attention to irrigation this island would have been only a dry sandbank. No flower or shoot or shrub would have sprung to life upon it. You and your ancestors by frugal habits, abstemious living, and laborious toil have turned Tarpon Island into an earthly paradise. Around me I see the fruits of your labor. Indeed, this cocoanut I hold in my hand is emblematic of your toil. I see in the distance a beautiful villa with a charming garden and in the garden are growing bananas, pineapples and cassava . . . a veritable Garden of Eden. It breaks my heart to think that Tarpon Island, this pearl in the crown of my Mother the Queen of England is to be removed from her imperial diadem . . . and, yet, to no country would I so willingly see such a jewel bequeathed . . . as to the Great Republic of the West over which waves the star spangled banner. In the name of my most august parent, Fictitia the Fourth, Queen of England and Empress of India, I declare Tarpon Island ceded to the United States of America.

[Putan Take hauls down the flag and wraps it up in the cashmere shawl that had contained the leopard skin.]

MATILDA. Thanks, Princess. Bosun, run up Old Glory! *[Turning to colonists.]* You men had better behave yourselves and stop bootlegging. We're dry from now on!

PRINCESS. Well, it was thirsty work . . . can anyone give me a drink . . . of lemonade.

J.-V. May I offer you a drink from the flask that belonged to the great Volstead . . . my ancestor.

[Exit Dougal, as if someone calls him.]

PRINCESS. No, thanks.

[Bosun confiscates the famous flask.]

MATILDA. I thought your speech was great, Princess!

PRINCESS. I am so glad. Did you really like it?

[Exit John Volstead on a call from Dougal.]

MATILDA. Indeed I did.

PRINCESS. Will it be telegraphed all over the world . . . there were no reporters present.

MATILDA. We'll see to the publicity part of it later, Princess. My talk alone will occupy three columns of the New York Times.

PRINCESS. But it strikes me that I said more than you did . . . and my address is only good for about half a column!

MATILDA. I didn't deliver mine. It is in my cabin . . . my stenographer, Clarence, is preparing it.

PRINCESS. May I have the pleasure of perusing it later on.

MATILDA. Certainly, my dear Wales.

PRINCESS. I caught six redsnappers this morning. The man who just walked off took me out fishing . . . a priceless fellow! He didn't know who I was till I told him . . . after I had landed the third redsnapper . . . but before I told him I learnt a lot of inside information about mamma. He declares among other things that she is addicted to gin.

MATILDA. Is she?

PRINCESS. She prefers Oporto. I shouldn't dare to tell her what Dougal said about her. However, he admitted it was only gossip.

MATILDA. Why, you'd dare to do anything. I believe that after my marriage you'll kiss my husband before I have time to do so myself. It's a best-woman's privilege!

PRINCESS. I'm not above that. I bet he's a good looker and very demure. I do like demure men! They're in fashion just now. Fashions in men and dogs are always changing. I do so like demure men . . . and police dogs.

MATILDA. So do I. That's why I chose Jack.

PRINCESS. I'm dying to see him.

[Enter JOHN VOLSTEAD, now quite sober.]

J.-V. [*Excitedly.*] Admiral, I have something very important to tell you.

MATILDA. Be brief. I am marrying your son at two o'clock this afternoon.

J.-V. I have had the straits between Tarpon Island and the mainland remeasured by independent surveyors, Hutchins and Mutchins of Miami. Their report has just come to hand this minute. [*Shows a paper.*]

MATILDA. Well, what about Hutchins and Mutchins of Miami?

J.-V. The extreme western point of Tarpon Island is three miles one hundred yards from the mainland. We are outside the Three Mile Limit. Tarpon Island instead of approaching the coastline of the United States is now receding into the Atlantic.

PRINCESS. Evidently the island does not like the prospect of prohibition!

MATILDA. Well?

J.-V. Tarpon Island . . . is moving away from America at the rate of one hundred yards a year . . .

MATILDA. Indeed!

J.-V. The new breakwater at Miami, finished last Fall, has altered

the course of the ocean current that piles the sand on the west shore of Tarpon Island.

MATILDA. It may have altered the course of the Gulf Stream itself for all I care!

PRINCESS. I hope not. The climate of England is so abominable already . . . reciprocity, my dear Admiral. America warms Britain with her Gulf Stream . . . and Britain warms America with her stream of . . . Scotch.

J.-V. Tarpon Island instead of approaching the coast of America . . . is receding into the Atlantic at the rate of nearly one hundred yards a year.

MATILDA. That doesn't interest me.

J.-V. [*Turning to Princess.*] Princess, cannot you help me? A great injustice has been done to me and my son.

PRINCESS. My good colonist . . . what's the matter?

MATILDA. He's mad because the bootlegging possibilities of Tarpon Island have been removed by the operation of the Haines-Punchford Treaty and the cession of the Island to America.

PRINCESS. Can't the poor man get a drink when he wants to? It's an Englishman's birthright to get a drink when he wants to.

MATILDA. He's not an Englishman.

PRINCESS. Well, what's he got to grumble about? Didn't he make his own laws?

MATILDA. He wants to continue to be under the British flag to facilitate his rum running business and use the Island as a warehouse.

PRINCESS. Then he's a bootlegger!

MATILDA. Yes, and it's his son Jack that I'm going to marry at two o'clock this afternoon.

PRINCESS. A bootlegger! Isn't he an interesting creature? My dear Admiral, pray present him. Bootleggers are so very delightful. He may be of use to me in my approaching visit to the United States. I do love to meet out-of-the-way people.

MATILDA. Fictitia Princess of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall meet Mr. John Volstead.

PRINCESS. Charmed, I am sure.

J.-V. [*Gruffly.*] Glad to meet you. My father Oley Volstead supplied your mother with a case of Gordon Gin when she was Princess of Wales and was stopping at Chicago. [*Hands his card to Princess.*]

PRINCESS. I'm dying to see your son Jack. Do you know that I am to be best-woman at the wedding this afternoon. [*Reads card.*] Ah . . . Telegraphic Address "Wood Alcohol, Tarpon Island."

J.-V. There wont be no wedding!

PRINCESS. What, no wedding . . . why I have been taught that two negatives make an affirmative, Mr. Volstead!

J.-V. Hell's Bells!

MATILDA. Is that the way to speak to the Princess of Wales, Mr. Volstead.

J.-V. I tell you there will be no wedding . . . Hell's Bells!

PRINCESS. Hell's Bells! Hell's Bells! I can hear them ringing.

MATILDA. So can I.

PRINCESS. [*Aside.*] They must be wedding bells!

J.-V. Princess, you think your jollyng me, but I tell you I'm downright serious. I tell you, lady, I love this island. It's been in the Volstead family for three generations. If the American flag remains flying I shall have to shut up my business and leave Tarpon Island.

PRINCESS. Well, I admit it's hard on you, Mr. Volstead . . . but come, don't you think it's a little old fashioned to imagine you have any right to decide who your son shall marry?

J.-V. You don't know me! I'm a desperate man! There shall be no wedding between my son Jack and you, Admiral Matilda, unless Tarpon Island becomes British again. That is my final offer . . . take it or leave it.

PRINCESS. But, Mr. Volstead, the American flag has been hoisted . . . the island has already been transferred.

J.-V. There were no reporters present . . .

MATILDA. The transfer is legal without newspaper men being present. I know something of International Law.

J.-V. Oh . . . you don't understand what I mean, women!

MATILDA. [*With scorn.*] You're only a man!

PRINCESS. Mr. Volstead, I think you wish Tarpon Island to become British again . . . not for any love of England, but in order to do some more smuggling . . . I am sure that my Mother, Queen Fictitia, would strongly disapprove of one of her islands being used for such an immoral purpose!

J.-V. Any wet flag will suit me . . . give me that of the Irish Free State. It'll never go dry!

PRINCESS. It may rain soon. [*Looks at the sky and then at the flag.*]

MATILDA. Why do you object so strongly to the transfer of the island *after* the transfer has been made? You did not say much during the ceremony.

J.-V. I was too intoxicated to properly register a protest. Now I am

sober . . . and I have just realized that I am going to lose a million dollars . . .

MATILDA. A million dollars . . . how . . . why?

PRINCESS. My poor fellow, tell us all about it! You are so excited that you have broken Mamma's language and split an infinitive.

J.-V. Hell's Bells!

PRINCESS. Tut! Tut! Tut! Tut!

MATILDA. You'd better mend your manners or I'll arrest you under the twenty-seventh Amendment. You're on American soil.

J.-V. Well, "Hell's Bells" is not swearing, is it?

MATILDA. That is for me to decide. How are you going to lose a million dollars?

J.-V. I have an insurance policy.

MATILDA. Won't the company pay?

J.-V. It is not liable.

MATILDA. An insurance company is always liable.

J.-V. I've a use and occupancy or consequential loss policy on Tarpon Island that I took out as I thought to protect me against loss and damage to my business through Tarpon Island being ceded to America under the provisions of the Haines-Punchford Treaty. Here it is! I've just re-read it, and the policy says nothing *about the transfer of the island to America*. The indemnity of a million dollars is only payable to me, my heirs, or successors when the insurance underwriters have ascertained by the measurements of their own surveyors that at high tide Tarpon Island is situated three sea miles or less from the coast of America. The policy only speaks of measurements . . . not of the cession of Tarpon Island . . . not about loss to me through its becoming dry. No, only measurements! Measurements!

MATILDA. Well, you have only to wait a year or two and the island will be within the Three Mile Limit and you'll get your money . . . perhaps my measurements *were* wrong! Such mistakes do happen, even in the Dry Navy.

J.-V. But I tell you Tarpon Island is now moving *out* to sea . . . the new breakwater at Miami has changed the drift of the sand. I am already a hundred yards off one million dollars . . . in 'twenty years' time I shall be over a mile away from a million dollars.

PRINCESS. An idea! Why not claim damages from Great Britain?

J.-V. A fat lot I should get. How can I prove my loss? I keep no books. I'm a bootlegger!

PRINCESS. Well, we've just finished paying off our War Debts.

Communicate with our Chancellor of the Exchequer and she'll send you a check. That's what she's for! Say you're a wine merchant!

[Curtain drops, and as it rises a great uproar of female voices is audible.]

MATILDA. I have searched all over the island and I can't find Jack. It is now one o'clock and my wedding was to take place at two.

PRINCESS. Dear Matilda . . . is it possible . . . is it possible that Jack has jilted you?

MATILDA. Never! Jack loves me too much to jilt me.

PRINCESS. Perhaps the poor boy has been smuggled out of the island by his father.

MATILDA. Impossible! The destroyers "Hyball" and "Beavo" of the Dry Navy have been circling around Tarpon Island on patrol duty. What . . . what shall I do?

PRINCESS. What about John Volstead's Ford aeroplane?

MATILDA. There is his Brown Bessie. *[Points to aeroplane.]* Oh, where is Jack; he must be on the island! He cannot be far off!

[Enter BOSUN and GUNNER, immediately followed by JOHN VOLSTEAD, JONATHAN and PUTAN TAKE minus his bundle. The sailors stand to attention and salute.]

MATILDA. Bosun, what have you to report?

BOSUN *[Saluting.]* The entire ship's company of the "Sahara" is ashore searching for Mr. Jack Volstead.

MATILDA. Have my orders been obeyed?

BOSUN. Yes, Admiral . . . the women have searched every nook and cranny of Tarpon Island.

MATILDA. Have they found any clues?

BOSUN. Hundreds and hundreds of bottles of it.

MATILDA. You misunderstand me . . . I said "clues" . . . not "booze."

BOSUN. Beg pardon, Admiral.

PRINCESS. What a perfect pandemonium those women are making . . . I think some of them must be inebriated.

[All listen to the uproar.]

MATILDA. Oh, terrible thought . . . is it possible that Jack has been drowned? Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?

BOSUN. The mine-sweepers of the Dry Fleet are searching for his body.

[Matilda almost breaks down . . . removes her hat for first time.]

PRINCESS. [*After mumbling some foreign words to Putan Take.*] The entire crew of the "Renown" has joined in the search . . . men and women.

[*Enter DOUGAL, wildly excited.*

DOUGAL. [*Rushing in and addressing Bosun.*] Pipe your whistle and call off your wild women. Man, it's like Hell let loose! They're tearing Tarpon Island to pieces! I've never seen a sight like it in my life. A city put to sack by the Toorks is nothing compared with what those sailor women are doing! The crews of all the warships is ashore.

[*Matilda breaks down and commences to sob bitterly.*

PRINCESS. There now, Admiral . . . be brave!

MATILDA. I love him! I love him . . . I was to marry him today!

DOUGAL. I think it can be arranged if you listen to reason. You're very hysterical for a woman.

MATILDA. He is dead. He is drowned.

DOUGAL. No! No! Admiral. Mister Volstead's just secreted Jack in one of his numerous hootch cellars. If you haul doon the American flag and make Tarpon Island a fit place to enjoy the pusuit of happiness . . . in other words, make it wet again, there will be no impediment to your marriage.

MATILDA. [*Tearfully.*] Have you any objection, Princess, to the island becoming English again. They . . . they've discovered that there is no real gold mine in Penguin Island. It's of no value to England. I got a wireless just now!

PRINCESS. My dear Admiral, in any case your happiness is above all considerations of Empire.

MATILDA. [*Addressing John Volstead.*] Will you find me Jack if I do as Dougal asks.

J.-V. Sure, Admiral, if you can make Tarpon Island fit for us Volsteads to live in I'll give you the lad . . . with a father's blessing.

MATILDA. Where's the Union Jack . . . [*Pulls down the Stars and Stripes.*]

PRINCESS. It's the first time you've ever lowered your flag, Admiral.

DOUGAL. There's a man in the case. Women are so feeble.

MATILDA. [*Hurriedly.*] Give me the Union Jack. I'll run it up!

PRINCESS. We haven't one handy. Putan Take found it smelt

so vilely of fermented cocoanut milk that he put it in the boiler of the "Renown's" laundry and didn't take it out . . .

MATILDA. What . . . what shall I do? [*Looks appealingly at Dougal.*]

DOUGAL. Hoist the Prohibition Flag of the Dry Navy upside down!

MATILDA. So I will. [*She runs up the Dry Flag. The Bosun tries to assist her but she brushes her aside, so anxious she is to transfer the island to Great Britain without delay.*]

PRINCESS. That piece of bunting will do. All Mr. Volstead requires is a wet flag. A dry flag upside down is a wet one.

[*All present salute the flag.*]

DOUGAL. Well, that's that!

PRINCESS. Wait a minute . . . if you please. Tarpon Island has not been annexed . . . I mean reannexed. [*All salute the flag again.*] In the name and by the command of my august parent Victoria the Fourth, Queen of Great Britain and the Dominions beyond the Seas and Empress of India, I declare Tarpon Island once more a British possession.

[*BOSUN hands back to J.-V., his historic flask.*]

MATILDA. Where . . . where is dear Jack?

J.-V. I'll soon show you. [*Kicks away brushwood and opens a trap-door leading to Oley Volstead's wine cellar. Places his head close to the ground.*] Jack! [*There is no answer.*] Jack! Jack! Jack!

DOUGAL. Is he suffocated by the fumes of the wine?

MATILDA. Jack! Jack! [*Rushes down the steps of the cellar and reappears with Jack in her arms. She tries to hold him up but he faints in the fashion of a girl of the eighteenth century.*]

PRINCESS. He wants air . . . unlace his corsets!

MATILDA. [*Wildly.*] Why, Jack doesn't wear corsets. What . . . what shall I do?

J.-V. I'll fix him. Give him a drop of "rum."

[*Jack comes to slowly.*]

MATILDA. Oh, darling Jack!

PRINCESS. The transfer of Tarpon Island to Great Britain was just in time. Brandy has saved Jack's life.

JACK. Where am I?

MATILDA. Do not be afraid. You are with me, dear one.

PRINCESS. Oh, the pretty boy. How I envy you, Admiral. He's a stunner. A regular stunner!

JACK. Oh, father, why did you treat me so cruelly and lock me in your hootch cellar?

J.-V. Forgive me, Jack. I did it for the best. It was to keep the old established firm of Volstead from going into liquidation. [*Turning to Admiral.*] I shall make my son a handsome marriage settlement . . . as soon as I have incorporated my business, which I intend to do shortly.

MATILDA. Thanks, Mr. Volstead. An allowance will be useful to me. An Admiral's pay is not as large as some people suppose.

JACK. Matilda . . . promise me one thing.

MATILDA. Anything . . . everything. What is it, darling?

JACK. That you will give up the sea as soon as we are married.

MATILDA. Oh, Jack! Give up my profession that I love so much?

JACK. Think how lonely I shall be at home looking after the baby.

MATILDA. Well . . . well, it is a great sacrifice . . . but I consent.

PRINCESS. The American woman of the twenty-first century is the slave of her husband.

MATILDA. Yes, we are their slaves . . . but in England you are not far behind us, in your servitude!

PRINCESS. I know.

MATILDA. I will give up the sea. I will hang up my sword on the hat-rack of some home in California. I will get a shore job. Perhaps at Hollywood.

J.-V. I will take you into partnership.

MATILDA. I must work. Why should I not be a rum runner? All labor is honorable!

JACK. It is too dangerous.

MATILDA. I know these coasts . . . every creek, key and inlet . . .

J.-V. Fine.

JACK. Darling, did you not promise to give up the sea?

MATILDA. So I did, Jack.

PRINCESS. I see I must be the Fairy Godmother . . .

JACK. As well as the best-woman at our marriage.

PRINCESS. Yes . . . Jack. Matilda . . . may I call him Jack . . . it's so, so . . . democratic!

MATILDA. Of course.

PRINCESS. I have a suggestion to make.

MATILDA. What is it, Princess?

PRINCESS. That you, Admiral, become Ambassador of the United

States at the Court of St. James. My august Mamma, Queen Fictitia, can arrange the matter. She is really an awfully good sort and if I approach her in the right way, after lunch is the best time, she'll be delighted to write an autograph letter to Mrs. Woodrow Harding, your President, asking that you should be appointed Ambassadress to Great Britain in London.

MATILDA. That would suit me.

JACK. Oh, it would be wonderful!

PRINCESS. I am sure, my dear Admiral, that you would make a most excellent Ambassadress and that your charming husband-to-be would give such delightful receptions.

MATILDA and JACK together. Isn't that grand. Well, it is good of you, Princess.

JACK. Father, you will come and see us in England in the dull season, when your business is quiet!

J.-V. My business is never quiet. I've a continent over there to irrigate . . . but I'll come and see you in England every now and then. I'll turn in this old Brown Bessie of a Ford [*slaps the aeroplane propeller*] and I'll buy a real long distance plane!

PRINCESS. I fancy, Mr. Volstead, that I hear the sound of bells.

J.-V. It's the old nigger parson at work, Princess. You don't mind being married in a coon church, Admiral? There's no other on Tarpon Island.

MATILDA. Anything will suit me!

PRINCESS. What an interesting experience—a coon church—so democratic!

JACK. What is that music, darling? I seem to know the tune!

MATILDA. It is the "Sahara's" band playing "The Battle of Tripoli . . . the battle where we trounced the Turks . . . today is the anniversary of the victory. [*She grips the hilt of her sword and for a moment gazes vacantly seawards. Then offering her arm to Jack, Admiral Matilda Cabot walks off the stage.*]

The curtain falls.

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